

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

INSIDE

Cuban youth leader tours
Australia and New Zealand

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VOL. 59/NO. 24 JUNE 19, 1995

South Africa abolishes capital punishment

Workers launch mass action for new labor act

BY GREG ROSENBERG

The death penalty, a weapon of terror used against thousands of working people in South Africa, has been abolished. In a unanimous decision June 6, South Africa's Constitutional Court voted to ban the use of capital punishment. A prison official at Pretoria Central penitentiary reported that the news was greeted with "shouting and clapping and general jubilation on death row."

That same day, 150,000 workers marched in four cities — Johannesburg, Durban, East London, and Pietermaritzburg — to assert their demands on the labor relations bill currently under negotiation. The demonstrations initiated a two-week campaign of mass action launched by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) to break an employer-inspired deadlock over the bill, which will abolish apartheid-era labor laws still on the books. Some 70,000 workers marched in Johannesburg alone, bringing downtown areas of South Africa's largest city to a standstill. Marchers rallied outside the stock exchange and the Chamber of Mines.



70,000 workers marched in Johannesburg June 6 demanding strengthening of workers rights in draft labor bill currently under negotiation. Marches initiated two-week campaign of mass action.

The crowd roared when South African president Nelson Mandela made a surprise visit to express his support for the march. "I felt it important to pledge my solidarity with you," said Mandela, who is also president of the African National Congress. He emphasized that workers have the right

to strike and demonstrate to win their demands. "You are entitled to use those rights, and the ANC fully supports you. We have the right to sit down and negotiate with employers. I am here to wish you

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Governor of Pennsylvania signs the death warrant for Mumia Abu-Jamal

BY HATTIE McCUTCHEON
AND GLOVA SCOTT

PHILADELPHIA — Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge signed the death warrant for political activist Mumia Abu-Jamal June 1, and set August 17 as the date of execution.

Ridge ordered three other executions at the same time. Last month, Pennsylvania authorities put to death the first state prisoner in 33 years.

"Consigning Jamal to death with a stroke of a pen was a particularly vindictive act, as Governor Ridge is well aware that Jamal's attorneys are set to file legal papers seeking a new trial and the setting aside of Jamal's death sentence on June 5," Abu-Jamal's lead council, Leonard Weinglass, stated.

"By his actions, Governor Ridge has shown his policy to be a vengeful race to death with alarming indifference to the judicial process."

According to Weinglass, "the appeal will demonstrate unequivocally that Mumia was the victim of a politically motivated, racially biased prosecution in which evidence of his innocence was suppressed."

Philadelphia police brutally beat Abu-Jamal

On Dec. 9, 1981, Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner was shot to death on a public street. Abu-Jamal was also shot. Despite the seriousness of his injuries Abu-Jamal was brutally beaten by the police at the scene and at the hospital. Witnesses reported seeing the police ram his head into a pole as they carried him to the police van. The cops harassed nurses who treated Abu-Jamal, telling them, "You should let the son of a bitch die."

Jamal was convicted April 3, 1982, of killing Faulkner and sentenced to death after less than four hours of deliberation by a mostly white jury.

The jury included one man whose close friend had been shot

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Philadelphia protest against death sentence, June 5.

'We go back united,' say oil workers in Brazil

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — Oil workers in Brazil suspended their 31-day-old national strike June 2 and returned to work after the government agreed to negotiate a disputed wage agreement and review the firings of dozens of strikers. The regime also withdrew the army troops that had occupied four of the struck refineries, which belong to the state-owned company Petrobrás.

Two of the unresolved issues are the fines and firings the Brazilian government slapped on the United Federation of Oil Workers (FUP) during the course of the strike. The administration of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso insists the union must pay \$35.7 million in fines imposed by the Supreme Labor Tribunal. The union is fighting to reinstate 59 fired workers; the government has agreed to review this issue but claims the number of dismissed unionists is 104.

"After staying out for 31 days, we had reached a standoff with the government," said Silvio José Marques, president of Sindipetro, the union of oil workers at the Paulínia refinery near São Paulo. "We decided to go back united, just as we all went out on strike united." He spoke to the *Militant* in a June 6 phone interview.

"Although we couldn't continue the work stoppage, the government was politically weakened by our fight. People have returned to work with very high morale."

Negotiations between the oil union and
Continued on Page 10

One week to go in drive to sell 'Militant'

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Supporters of the socialist press around the world are using the final days of an international campaign to win new readers to the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *New International* to participate in political events where workers and youth will be interested in the publications, go door-to-door in working-class neighborhoods, and follow up with people who have expressed interest.

With one week left in the effort, a total of 1,953 subscriptions to the *Militant* and 446 to the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial* had arrived at the *Militant* office in New York — 66 percent of the goal. Distributors also reported a total of 821 copies of the Marxist magazine *New International* sold.

Militant supporters who are close to making their goals are aiming to go over as a part of helping the international effort to maximize the number of new readers. The last subscriptions and *New International* sales totals must be in the *Militant* office by Wednesday, June 14, at noon E.S.T. to be counted on the final chart that will be printed in next week's *Militant*. Below are a few of the recent experiences *Militant* supporters have had selling the

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Protests in France hit privatization plan

Tens of thousands of workers at the state-owned telecommunications company, France Télécom, the post office, and gas companies staged a 24-hour strike May 30, to protest the government's plans to privatize those industries. Some 40,000 workers from the gas and electric companies marched in downtown Paris.

The unions say the moves would lead to layoffs, cost thousands of jobs, and mean deteriorating public services. Jacques Chirac, France's new president, announced the privatization plans six days after taking office.

Sweden overtime ban

Trade unions representing engineering workers in Sweden called off a three-week-old ban on overtime May 23, and won a national three-year wage agreement with the employers. The settlement includes an average 3.7 percent pay hike in the first year. The overtime ban, honored by 270,000 workers, was beginning to have a serious effect on production in a number of key Swedish export industries.

Athens extends territorial waters

The Greek Parliament passed a bill May 31 that extends Greek territorial waters from six to 12 nautical miles. Many Greek islands are within three to 10 miles of the western coast of Turkey in the Aegean Sea, where territorial waters are currently split in half.

Giorgos Mangakis, Greece's European affairs minister, said the move defends the country's "national interests from Turkey's chauvinistic threats." The Turkish government warned that the measure could lead to war.

Rights abuses block Ankara goal

The Turkish government's attacks on intellectuals who criticize its actions could undermine its bid for entry into the cus-

toms union agreement of the European Union. Pressure on members of the European Parliament is threatening to hold up Ankara's application unless its human rights record improves.

Turkey's prime minister, Tansu Ciller, proposed abolishing Article 8 of the country's so-called antiterrorism law to get around the European Parliament objections. Ciller would incorporate the substance of the article in Turkey's criminal code. The Human Rights Association, a nationwide Turkish monitoring group, says that more than 2,000 people have been convicted under Article 8 and scores of writers, journalists, and trade unionists have been jailed for defending the rights of Turkey's Kurdish minority.

More war in Chechnya

Russia's Lt. Gen. Gennady Troshev announced June 1 that a major assault is planned to flush out 5,000 Chechen fighters in the towns of Shatoi and Veden. Troshev stated Chechens hiding in the hills and mountains are sealed off, but the Russian forces have been trying unsuc-

cessfully for months to dislodge the Chechen fighters from their positions.

Brief negotiations sponsored by the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe were held May 25, but produced no agreement. Authorities in Moscow said more talks are scheduled for June 10. Meanwhile, Russian soldiers continue to suffer heavy casualties. The ITAR-Tass news agency reported the bodies of 50 Russian soldiers were brought into a hospital in Grozny May 25.

Beijing triples Iran oil imports

Iranian officials announced May 30 that an agreement was reached to increase oil sales to China to 60,000 barrels a day from the current 20,000 barrels. Tehran will earn more than \$400 million a year from the deal, which was made at the eighth Iran-China joint economic commission held in Beijing.

Iran, the world's second largest exporter of oil, would also invest more than \$25 million in China's oil refining business. The deal comes only a few weeks after U.S. president Bill Clinton issued an executive order prohibiting U.S. oil companies from buying Iranian oil.

Generals convicted

The Chilean Supreme Court sentenced Gen. Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda to seven years in prison and his deputy, Brig. Gen. Pedro Espinoza Bravo, to six years for ordering the 1976 assassination of opposition leader Orlando Letelier and his colleague Ronni Moffitt in Washington, D.C.

The two officers denied responsibility for the murders, stating the CIA killed Letelier and Moffitt. Letelier was Chile's ambassador to the United States under Salvador Allende, who was murdered in a coup staged by Gen. Augusto Pinochet with the help of the CIA in 1973. A government commission found that 3,000 people were tortured or disappeared during Pinochet's reign. Letelier was organizing opposition to the U.S.-backed military dictatorship in Chile at the time of his murder.

Gulf war vets hit hard

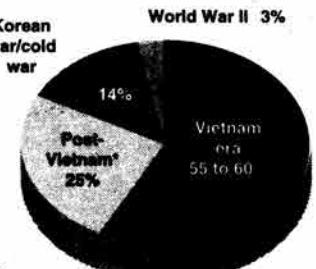
"The combination of a weak economy, medical problems and a lack of affordable housing have helped make Gulf veterans the fastest growing segment of the nation's 271,000 homeless veterans," according to the *New York Times*. Many Gulf war veterans say their problems stem from seeing burned-out tanks, bloody bunkers, and charred bodies. More than 30,000 veterans have complained of problems associated with what is called Gulf War syndrome, whose symptoms include fatigue, muscle pains, and breathing trouble, as well as post-traumatic stress disorder. These veterans suffer a high level of joblessness.

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

Homeless Veterans

On any given night, an estimated 271,000 of the nation's 26.4 million veterans are homeless.

Of those, most served in the armed forces during the Vietnam era.



*Includes Persian Gulf war veterans.

Source: National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

THE MILITANT
Solidarity with fighting workers in Latin America

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South African court bans death penalty

Continued from front page
luck," the ANC president said.

'A major victory'

"We have been discussing the death penalty as individuals," said Godfrey Manamela, an organizer for the National Union of Mineworkers, in a telephone interview from Carletonville. "We are delighted with the decision. We have been calling for this to be scrapped."

Manamela pointed out many miners had been placed on death row under apartheid. Advances by the ANC-led democratic revolution, however, compelled the white regime to place a moratorium on the death penalty in 1990. The National Party government lifted the ban in 1993, but there have been no hangings since.

The Draft Bill of Rights presented by the African National Congress for debate on South Africa's new constitution asserted that "Capital punishment is abolished and no further executions shall take place." Death penalty abolition has long been a central demand of the democratic movement in South Africa. It was used as the ultimate weapon of terror to break the democratic revolution and inspire fear in millions of workers and peasants — especially Blacks.

The ANC hailed the ruling. The court's decision "represents a major victory for the democratic forces of our country who for years campaigned for the abolition of the death penalty.... Never, Never, and Never again must citizens of our country be subjected to the barbaric practice of capital punishment."

All 11 judges on the court, established since the April 1994 nonracial elections, issued a statement in support of the ruling. "Everyone, including the most abominable of human beings, has a right to life, and capital punishment is therefore unconstitutional," declared court president Arthur Chaskalson, who is white. "Retribution cannot be accorded the same weight under our Constitution as the right to life and dignity," he said.

From the establishment of the Union of South Africa through the codification and entrenchment of apartheid rule, the white regime had the distinction of being one of the bloodiest, with one of the highest execution rates in the world. Between 1910 and 1989, more than 4,200 people were hanged. About half of those were put to death between 1978 and 1988, at the height of the anti-apartheid struggle.

Polarized reaction to ruling

The ruling drew a polarized reaction. It won praise from Amnesty International, which called it, "a huge step forward of worldwide significance."

Mandela's office issued a statement



Militant/Greg Rosenberg

ANC has long fought use of death penalty. Above, ANC leaders and cadres during February 1994 "Never Again" freedom march in Paarl, Western Cape. Many white opponents of apartheid were segregated off to Pretoria Central prison, including those pictured here. Death row inmates celebrated its abolition.

noting the decision as compatible with the bill of rights in the interim constitution, and said it "reflects a sober and humane consideration of the issue, and it is in line with contemporary civilized norms." The statement added the decision would have "no bearing on the commitment of the government to tackle the problem of crime."

Conservative and rightist organizations condemned the court's decision. They focused their fire on the high crime rates in South Africa — a result of the social disintegration that marked the final years of apartheid rule.

South African deputy president F.W. deKlerk said the National Party would campaign to have capital punishment reinstated. The Freedom Front, which agitates for an Afrikaner homeland within South African borders, called for a referendum on the death penalty. "The public demands that the death penalty should be reinstated and only once respect for the law is maintained...can penal reform be revisited," declared Freedom Front senator Rossier de Ville. The liberal capitalist Democratic Party complained that the state had not made provision for "proper punishment" in lieu of hanging.

The 453 people currently on death row are to have their sentences changed to life imprisonment.

The South African Agricultural Union, an organization of white capitalist farmers, said, "It is ironic that while several American states and England are considering the reintroduction of the death sen-

tence, South Africa with its high murder statistics is moving in the opposite direction."

The Inkatha Freedom Party said it used to oppose the death penalty, but was now internally divided on the issue.

South Africa's interim constitution, under which the ruling was made, is due to be replaced with a permanent document. The Constitutional Assembly is currently preparing the first draft for parliamentary debate. Assembly chairman Cyril Ramaphosa of the ANC reported June 2 that more than 1.7 million submissions have been made by people from throughout South Africa on the constitution.

Mass action opens on labor bill

"Yesterday's massive demonstration of workers sent out a clear signal to the nation that the working people of this country are determined to ensure that a new worker-friendly LRA [Labor Relations Act] is passed in the 1995 parliamentary session," said a June 7 COSATU statement. "The rolling mass action will continue with factory demonstrations, marches, shop stewards meetings, and other actions, culminating in the National Day of Action on June 19," when the union federation has called for a half-day countrywide strike.

COSATU is demanding that the employers, with whom they are negotiating in the National Economic Development and Labor Council (NEDLAC), agree to incorporate a number of workers' demands into the labor bill before it goes to

parliament. These include the right to strike, provisions against the right to lock out, the banning of scab labor, centralized bargaining, and other issues.

"Full rights for majority unions," "No to scab labour, no to bosses delaying tactics," read some of the flags, banners, and placards in the June 6 actions.

An ANC statement said the organization was "concerned that negotiations at NEDLAC should not be abused to roll back legitimate gains made by workers even during the dark days of apartheid.... In this context the ANC appeals to all interested parties to play a meaningful role in their negotiations with labour to ensure the new labour relations bill is tabled during this session of parliament."

"We are not going to allow the bosses of this country to trample on workers' rights," said ANC deputy secretary general Cheryl Carolus, who joined the Johannesburg march.

The Johannesburg daily *Business Day* lamented the COSATU campaign, which it said, "will hardly advance the

cause of creating the investor-friendly environment which government says it favours." The National Party appealed to Mandela to get workers off the streets and back into the negotiating structures, saying his comments at the rally showed the government's inability to act impartially.

The trade unions and business are to meet again June 12-13.

A June 2 statement from the American Chamber of Commerce said it supported the Labor Relations Bill in general, but could not "see its way clear to giving any form of support" to certain parts of the draft law. A spokesperson said the Chamber had the right to voice its concerns since U.S. firms paid taxes and generated wealth.

Listed objections included, "certain definitions regarding discrimination and dismissal on the grounds of age; provisions that organizational rights can unduly disrupt the operational activities of an employer," and "the absence in the Bill of any reference to a ballot as a pre-strike procedure."

"The mass action is rolling," said Godfrey Manamela of the Mineworkers. "Businessmen are dragging their feet. But these marches were just the beginning of our campaign."

'Militant' available on Peacenet

The *Militant* is now available via computer. All articles, columns, and editorials can be picked up on the socialist paper's new Peacenet conference by midday each Friday. Readers will need an account with Peacenet, which is part of the Institute for Global Communications and has affiliates in many countries. In the United States it can be reached at (415) 442-0220. The *Militant*'s conference name is: *militant.news*

To get articles from the *Militant* conference (hit *enter* after each step): First dial into Peacenet or its affiliate and type your account name and password. Pick "c" for conference.

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An appeal to our readers

Dear Reader,

During the next few weeks, *Militant* reporting teams will bring our readers on-the-spot coverage of the impact of the capitalist economic crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean and working people's response, as well as continue our eyewitness reports on developments in Cuba.

This week Argiris Malapanis, who has written extensively about developments in Cuba, and Martin Koppel, editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, are in Argentina covering protests against the government's austerity plans. They have also covered the oil workers strike in Brazil, as well as the São Paulo Forum, which took place in Montevideo, Uruguay. The forum is a gathering of political parties from throughout Latin America and the Caribbean that identify with the fight for national sovereignty and against imperialist domination.

HELP THE 'MILITANT' PROVIDE EYEWITNESS REPORTS from Argentina, Haiti, and Cuba

A team of *Militant* correspondents — Mary-Alice Waters and Luis Madrid from New York and Ernie Mailhot from Miami — will spend two weeks in Cuba in June and participate in a conference of U.S. and Cuban philosophers and social scientists. They will visit Havana and Matanzas and speak with workers, farmers, and youth on the measures being taken to confront Cuba's economic crisis and defend the socialist revolution.

Another feature of *Militant* coverage beginning next week will be first-hand reporting from Haiti. These trips make possible the kind of unmatched coverage the *Militant* has been able to consistently provide on Cuba and working-class struggles throughout the Americas. The cost of these trips will exceed \$14,000, so your generous help is needed.

The *Militant* depends on the contribu-

tions from our readers to make these trips possible. Please send your contribution today!

Sincerely,

Naomi Craine

Naomi Craine
Business Manager

Make your contribution payable to the *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014, and specify "Travel Fund."

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Why Iowa gov't tries to silence working farmers

BY MARK CURTIS

FORT MADISON, Iowa - Many weeks of rain here in the Midwest is causing not only flooding but a serious delay in getting

**Mark Curtis**

Iowa's government is putting more effort into getting one of them to just shut up. The Iowa Department of Transportation has ordered Larry Ginter to take down a sign he erected on his farm that says "BRANSTAD & HOG FACTORIES - ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL DAMAGE."

Iowa governor Terry Branstad claims through his spokeswoman that he "supports small farmers" and Department of Transportation officials say they only want the sign down because it violates the state's billboard laws. Ginter put the sign up to protest the governor's policies favoring corporate agriculture and he believes it's the message, visible from the highway, that they want to get rid of. He plans to leave it right where it is.

Ginter's been a fighter for the interests of working farmers like himself for quite a few years now. A couple of weeks ago Ginter wrote me a letter describing what farmers are up against.

"Many family farm hog producers are

quitting," he writes. "I am holding on but my production costs are higher than the price I receive from the packer. Many of us feel collusion is occurring between those agribusiness conglomerates and the packers. We can't prove it and we have asked the Attorney General to investigate but that may be like spitting into a strong headwind."

Ginter and other farmers went to Clinton's agriculture summit in Ames but found it to be nothing but "a controlled show," he wrote.

"The President did take questions from the audience but it was very selective when they saw our protest T-shirts. Ha! I finally stood up but was totally ignored."

Ginter wrote that he wanted to talk about "the austerity programs imposed upon countries like Mexico, Brazil, Central America. The forced switching of staple food production to cash grains for export is a grave moral question. It's criminal, talk about three strikes and you're out. How many sins has Yankee Imperialism

inflicted upon the underdeveloped world? Every nation on earth is under debt bondage and with wages and raw material underpriced the toilers of the world must fight for economic and political justice."

Fighting for economic and political justice is exactly what Ginter does and that's why Clinton didn't want to hear him speak and why Branstad wants his sign to come down. These politicians, one a Democrat, the other a Republican, represent wealthy farmers and capitalist agribusiness for whom the farm crisis is just an opportunity to get richer. Speculators at the Chicago Board of Trade, for example, made millions as news of the flooding sent grain futures soaring.

The real issue is not the weather, but the right of working farmers to a decent income. They are a crucial ally of the wage workers who must build an unbreakable bond with them in a common fight against a shared enemy — the exploiting class.

So keep your sign up Larry Ginter and keep on swinging.

corn and soybeans planted early enough for their required growing season. For thousands of small farmers this means yet another disaster in their struggle to stay one step ahead of foreclosure by the banks and creditors.

Instead of helping these working people whose hard labor feeds the rest of us,

Latin American activists back defense of Curtis

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

SÃO PAULO, Brazil — "Wait a minute, I know this man. It's Mark Curtis," said Carlos Medina, an Uruguayan journalist who works for Radio Havana in Montevideo, Uruguay. Medina had just seen a picture of Curtis on the cover of the pamphlet *Why Is Mark Curtis Still In Prison?* The booklet was on display at a literature table during the meeting of the São Paulo Forum, a gathering of political parties in Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place in Montevideo May 25-28.

"He is still in jail? It's unbelievable," he said. Medina first found out about the Curtis case when he lived in Stockholm, Sweden. "I met people from the Mark Curtis Defense Committee in the United States who were on tour in Sweden in early 1989," Medina said. "I remember I was shocked to see the picture of Curtis after he was beaten bloody by the police while in their custody. It made a big impression on me that the cops called him a 'Mexican lover' when they pummeled him. Back then I wrote an article on Curtis's frame-up to show the real face of the U.S. 'justice system' and to win support for his freedom."

Curtis is a unionist and political activist who was framed up by the police in Des Moines, Iowa, on trumped-up charges of rape and burglary and was sentenced to 25 years in prison. When he was arrested, he was involved in a fight along with other union members in the meatpacking plant where he worked to defend 17 immigrant co-workers from El Salvador and Mexico who had been detained during a raid by immigration agents in the factory.

"After my article was published, I sent

a copy to Mark at the penitentiary where he was held in Iowa. But prison authorities returned it to me, saying they would not accept printed material from abroad," Medina said. "A few months later I came back to Montevideo and I haven't heard anything about Mark since."

The next day, Medina brought a copy of this article to Curtis's supporters from the United States he had met at the Forum. It had been published in *Liberación*, a Spanish-language weekly published in Stockholm. "I kept this article in my files all these years. Could you make sure to get it to Mark?" he said. "I always wanted him to know what I did in his defense."

Getting new supporters signed on

Medina, already an endorser of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, talked to other participants at the gathering in Montevideo about the case.

Twenty-two people among the 160 participants at the São Paulo Forum signed up as endorsers of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee and contributed \$25 towards Curtis's fight for parole. The new supporters came from Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Puerto Rico, and Uruguay.

Susana Pereyra, a member of the Broad Front in Montevideo, was one of the endorsers. "I can understand this case because of my own experience with the police," she said. Pereyra is an activist in what has become known as the CX44 case, which refers to a radio station the government of Uruguay shut down last year. The station was broadcasting news and talk shows favorable to three Basque political activists who were arrested by the police in Montevideo and extradited to



Militant reporter Martín Koppel, left, discusses Curtis case at São Paulo forum.

Spain after Madrid accused them of "terrorism." A series of rallies demanding asylum for the three refugees, including a union-led march, took place last August, which Pereyra helped to build. During one of these actions, the police shot and killed Fernando Morroni, among the demonstrators.

"The police then accused a number of protesters with assault, the cops who murdered Morroni weren't brought to justice, and the government shut down Radio 44," she said.

Pereyra and many other defenders of democratic rights in Uruguay have organized a campaign demanding the government drop the charges against the demonstrators and bring to justice the police who fatally shot Morroni.

Support in Brazil

Curtis's fight for justice also received support from striking oil workers and others here in Brazil.

Neuri Rosetto, a member of the National Coordinating Committee of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST), said in an interview in São Paulo on May 30 that his organization plans to include Curtis's fight for justice in the proceedings of the MST's national convention, which will take place in Brasília, the country's capital, July 24-27.

"We are planning a demonstration at the U.S. embassy during our convention to denounce Washington's imperial land grabs throughout Latin America," Rosetto said. "We will make the case of Mark and of other fighters framed up by the police or the U.S. government one of the main points of the rally." Rosetto said he expects about 5,000 delegates at the convention.

The MST endorsed the Mark Curtis Defense Committee in 1992. Since then, the organization has translated materials by the defense committee and articles from

Perspectiva Mundial, a Spanish-language monthly published in New York, into Portuguese and has used them to publicize the Curtis case in Brazil and at two international forums in Europe. "Many of our members identify with Mark because they've had similar experiences," Rosetto said.

The MST organizes rural workers and peasants who are landless to occupy fallow lands or areas owned by big landowners and then begin to cultivate the fields while fighting for legal title. MST members often face attacks and frame-up charges by the army and the police, Rosetto explained.

After the nightly plant-gate rally on May 30 in solidarity with the striking oil workers who were occupying the Petrobrás refinery in Cubatão, the Curtis case became a topic of discussion at a tent that served as the canteen. One of the oil workers who spoke Spanish began explaining the case in Portuguese to other unionists after reading parts of the Spanish-language edition of the pamphlet *Why Is Mark Curtis Still in Prison?* and talking with *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martín Koppel, who was on the scene covering the strike.

Uriel Villas Boas, president of STIMMES, the metal workers union at the huge Cosipa steel fabricating complex in the adjacent city of Santos, was also on the picket line at Cubatão that evening. He contributed \$10 towards Curtis's fight for parole.

"Here the bosses, their goons, and the police often kill activists for doing precisely what Mark Curtis did," said Antonio Carrara, a member of SINDIPETRO, the oil workers union on strike at the Petrobrás refinery in Paulínia, in an interview at the union hall. Carrara and Silvio José Marques, the union president, said they will bring the Curtis case before the union local for discussion.

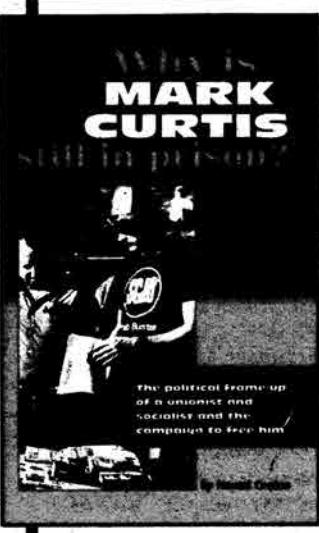
Now Available in Spanish

Why Is Mark Curtis Still In Prison?

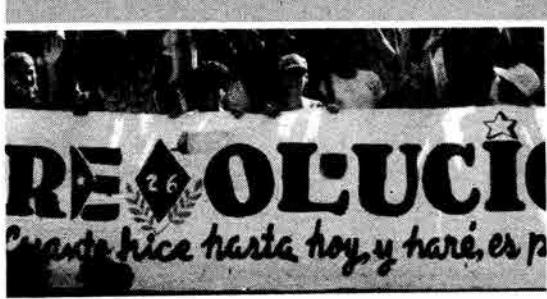
The Political Frame-Up of a Unionist and Socialist and the Campaign to Free Him
by Naomi Craine

Mark Curtis is a union activist and socialist who was framed up by police on false charges of rape and burglary in March 1988. At the time he was involved in a struggle to defend 17 Mexican and Salvadoran co-workers arrested in an immigration raid at the packinghouse where he worked in Des Moines, Iowa.

This new pamphlet explains what happened to Curtis, and the stakes for workers, farmers, youth, and other democratic-minded people in demanding his release. Pamphlet, \$6



Available at bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax (212) 727-0150. Or contact the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, P.O. Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa, 50311. Tel: (515) 246-1695.



Sales drive enters final week

Continued from front page
socialist press.

Los Angeles distributors report selling eight subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* going door to door for an hour and a half in a neighborhood called La Cooperativa in Ventura. The community traces its roots to a struggle by farm workers in the 1960s who fought for land to build their houses. All who bought subscriptions were angry about revelations of FBI spying on United Farm Workers leader César Chávez.

Seven more *Militant* subscriptions and a *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription were sold to participants in a Militant Labor Forum on the "counterterrorism" bill currently in Congress. Speakers at the forum, which drew 70 people, included several prominent fighters for democratic rights and political freedom.

"The moment we put up one of our poster-size Pathfinder book covers, the literature table was surrounded by people, primarily young asking, 'Are those books for sale?'" wrote a participant in recent reporting trip to Haiti. Pathfinder literature tables were set up at the Third Congress of the National Popular Association (APN), at a student conference against the policies of the International Monetary Fund, and at a college campus, all in Port-au-Prince.

The top-sellers were books and pamphlets on the Cuban revolution, including 22 copies of *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Che Guevara and 12 copies of *Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today* by Mary-Alice Waters, both in French.

Jean Louis Joseph, a student ac-



Youth in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, were eager for socialist literature.

tivist from Cap Haitien who opposes the occupation of Haiti by U.S. and United Nations troops, has been unable to find work and lives with his uncle, who sews shoes. Joseph said that on a good day his uncle makes \$4. After seeing the Pathfinder table, the young activist went around to his friends and collected \$13 so that they could share several books and pamphlets by Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, Che Guevara, and Fidel Castro. Seven copies of the French-language *Nouvelle Internationale* no. 5, with the main article titled "Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War," were among the 12 copies of *Nouvelle Internationale* sold during the brief trip.

Workers in the coalfields have welcomed the chance to get the

Militant. In a week of sales around Birmingham, Alabama, including several at mine portals and door to door in coal communities, supporters sold 70 single copies and six *Militant* subscriptions.

Salt Lake City supporters returned to two mines they had visited recently in Window Rock and Kayenta, Arizona, where they sold 60 copies of the *Militant* and five subscriptions to miners. The mostly Navajo miners liked the *Militant's* coverage of the struggles of coal miners, and also wanted to read the articles on the fight for land rights by Maoris in New Zealand.

Barry Fatland from Los Angeles, Simone Berg from Newark, Tim Mailhot from Birmingham, Kevin Johnson from Pittsburgh, and Dan Fein from Salt Lake City contributed to this column.

Philadelphia events commemorate police assault on MOVE house

BY GLOVA SCOTT

PHILADELPHIA — Over the May 12 weekend, several protests and commemorations took place here to mark the 10th anniversary of the police assault on the MOVE house.

On May 13, 1985, in the mostly Black neighborhood of West Philadelphia, hundreds of heavily armed cops prepared to arrest seven adults on various weapons violations and other charges. Area residents were forced to evacuate or face arrest if they stayed. But 10,000 rounds of ammunition did not force MOVE members to surrender. So Philadelphia city police dropped a bomb at 5:27 p.m. on the house at 6221 Osage Ave. It was meant to blast open a rooftop bunker so that tear gas could be used to force MOVE (American Christian Movement for Life) members out.

Instead, the roof caught on fire. Philadelphia police commissioner Gregore Sambor, together with Fire Commissioner William Richmond, decided to let the fire keep going. Hours later, 63 homes were

burned to the ground, leaving 250 people homeless and 11 MOVE members dead, including 5 children. The attack was approved by the first Black mayor of Philadelphia, Wilson Goode.

The city maintains ownership of the house at 6221 Osage Ave. Three shifts of cops, 24 hours a day, sit in the house to prevent MOVE members from moving back in.

On Friday, May 12, 40 people gathered for a protest at city hall sponsored by the August 8 Justice for MOVE Committee. Later that evening, some 50 people attended a memorial service organized by the American Friends Service Committee. Featured speakers were Ramona Africa, the lone adult to survive the assault on MOVE, and three members of the MOVE Tragedy Ad Hoc Commission, including Rev. Paul Washington, a well-known Black rights activist.

The MOVE Commission, appointed by Mayor Goode, published a 1,600-page report in 1986 accusing the mayor, police com-

missioner, managing director, and fire commissioner of being "grossly negligent." The commission urged that charges be filed. There was a grand jury investigation. But no public officials were ever indicted. Africa served seven years in prison on riot and conspiracy charges.

On May 13, MOVE held a six-hour speak-out at the 1199C hospital workers union hall. About 200 people attended. Participants came from as far away as Los Angeles, Cleveland, Chicago, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C., as well as from across Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. A representative from a human rights group in Belgium attended.

Africa has been speaking around the country, building support for the release of nine MOVE members still in jail. "We didn't deserve what happened to us 10 years ago. This is not just a MOVE issue. What happened to MOVE can happen to anybody. And more people are beginning to question the government," she said.

Militant 2,950
Perspectiva Mundial 675
New International 1,200

sold 66%
should be 90%

	<i>Militant</i>		<i>Perspectiva Mundial</i>		<i>New International</i>		
	sold	goal	%	sold	goal	sold	goal
Sweden*	36	40	90%	13	15	46	45
Iceland	13	15	87%	0	1	2	3
Canada							
Vancouver	59	70	84%	7	8	20	20
Toronto	62	85	73%	10	15	29	45
Montreal	39	75	52%	7	25	25	45
Total	160	230	70%	24	48	74	110
Greece	7	10	70%	0	1	4	4
United States							
Tucson	10	10	100%	1	2	2	5
Los Angeles	172	180	96%	70	90	84	90
Seattle	78	90	87%	13	15	21	25
Houston	66	80	83%	11	20	20	20
Peoria*	41	50	82%	3	4	16	20
Atlanta*	71	90	79%	25	25	18	25
Washington, DC	60	80	75%	19	30	29	35
Greensboro	49	70	70%	5	8	12	20
Boston	70	100	70%	12	30	20	35
Miami	72	105	69%	27	45	45	60
Birmingham	48	70	69%	4	5	9	20
Salt Lake City	71	105	68%	14	20	14	35
Pittsburgh	69	105	66%	7	12	9	30
Detroit	62	95	65%	4	10	23	28
Morgantown	35	55	64%	1	2	6	20
Twin Cities*	75	120	63%	21	22	20	35
Philadelphia	71	115	62%	13	30	28	45
San Francisco	92	150	61%	18	45	67	75
Cleveland	39	65	60%	11	12	15	50
Des Moines	50	85	59%	15	36	8	30
Chicago	62	130	48%	19	30	26	50
Brooklyn	58	130	45%	29	40	49	65
New York	59	135	44%	26	30	44	75
Newark	49	130	38%	20	35	18	60
Cincinnati	4	12	33%	0	2	0	3
New Haven	1	15	7%	0	3	0	3
Total U.S.	1534	2372	65%	382	603	603	959
New Zealand							
Wellington	9	10	90%	0	0	2	4
Christchurch	23	40	58%	2	2	4	10
Auckland	44	80	55%	1	6	8	20
Total	76	130	58%	3	8	14	34
Britain							
Sheffield*	15	15	100%	1	1	0	10
London*	55	70	79%	10	8	31	30
Manchester	21	60	35%	1	4	18	25
Total	81	145	56%	12	13	49	65
Australia	21	40	53%	5	6	11	15
Puerto Rico	1	2	50%	3	8	3	5
France	4	10	40%	2	5	15	20
Belgium	0	3	0%	0	4	0	10
Other	20			2			
International	1953	2997	66%	446	712	821	1270
Should be	2655	2950	90%	608	675	1080	1200
IN THE UNIONS							
AUSTRALIA							
AWU-FIME	1	2	50%	1	1	0	0
AMWU (Metal)	0	1	0%	0	1	0	0
Total	1	3	33%	1	2	0	0
CANADA							
IAM	10	11	91%	1	5	2	5
CEP	2	7	29%	0	1	0	1
USWA	1	6	17%	0	0	1	3
CAW	4		0%	2	0	0	0
Total	17	24	71%	3	6	3	9
NEW ZEALAND							
EU	3	5	60%	0	1	1	2
MWU	0	4	0%	0	0	1	1
Total	3	9	33%	0	1	2	3
SWEDEN							
Foodworkers	0	2	0%	0	0	3	4
Metalworkers	1	2	50%	0	0	2	2
Transport	0	1	0%	0	0	1	3
Total	1	5	20%	0	0	6	9
U.S.							
IAM	59	75	79%	9	15	10	33
UFCW	11	15	73%	5	25	0	12
UTU	62	85	73%	3	7	6	44
UAW	63	100	63%	6	10	37	40
ACTWU/ILGWU	18	30	60%	9	24	1	18
USWA	24	40	60%	1	3	1	7
UMWA	10	23	43%	0	0	0	12
OCAW	23	55	42%	0	6	8	25
Total	270	423	64%	33	90	63	191
UNION TOTALS	291	462	63%	36	99	74	212

*raised goal

ACTWU-Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; AEEU-Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AWU-FIME-Australian Workers Union; AMWU(Metal) Australian Workers Union; CAW-Canadian Auto Workers; EU-Engineers Union; IAM-International Association of Machinists; ILGWU-International Ladies' Garment

D.C. cops kill two youths in one week

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Within the space of a week in mid-May, police officers here in two separate incidents shot to death two youths for what they claimed were alleged traffic violations.

"I feel my grandson was murdered by the police," stated Oralee Harris, grandmother of Sean Evans, the 14-year-old youth who was shot by a cop May 21.

"The way the cops treated myself and Sean's mother was terrible," said Harris in an interview with the *Militant*. "The police were so abusive to us. They would not let the mother near her child as he's sitting in the ambulance dying. They said they would beat the hell out of her if she put one foot near the ambulance."

According to the official police version of the slaying, Evans was shot after officer Mark Green stopped the car he was riding in for running a red light. The cops claimed Evans appeared to be reaching for a handgun. They also said they recovered a BB gun as well as several packets of crack cocaine in Evans's underwear.

"Sean never had a BB gun and he never dealt in drugs," stated Harris who charged that the cops planted these items on him.

Two men who witnessed the shooting from about 20 feet away stated that Evans never reached for a weapon, or anything else. "He was trying to get out of the car," said Cornia Conley. "The boy's hands were on the door. I never saw any gun."

"They said he had five ounces of coke, when cocaine costs \$350 an ounce, and didn't have any money," said Conley. "Be for real."

Family and friends of Sean Evans gathered at the D.C. courthouse June 1 to demand an independent investigation. Family members and supporters had previously organized a news conference and protest march in the area where the killing took place.

In the second incident, police officer Vernelle Tanner on May 15 shot to death 16-year-old Kedemah Kedar Dorsey, who the cops claimed was driving "recklessly" and attempting to run over a police officer.

According to an article in the *Washington Post*, however, a lawyer who witnessed this shooting disputed the cops' claim. "It was basically at point-blank range," he said. "I thought here's someone getting murdered in front of me."

Both officers have been placed on administrative leave.

In another case, the chief prosecutor in nearby Prince George's County on June 2 was forced to drop murder charges against 25-year-old Jeffrey Gilbert, who had been charged in the April 26 shooting of police Cpl. John Novabilski.

After being arrested, Gilbert was severely beaten by the cops and had to be hospitalized for four days. Shortly afterwards, the slain policeman's stolen pistol and the weapon used to kill him were



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

Family members and supporters protested outside D.C. courthouse June 1 to demand independent investigation of cop killing of 14-year-old Sean Evans.

found in the possession of another man, Ralph McLean, who killed himself after a shoot-out with the police.

A public outcry against the arrest and beating of Gilbert finally forced the authorities to back down. At a news conference, a group of community activists, including the president of Maryland's chapter of the NAACP, protested Gilbert's arrest, beating, and continued detention and asked for a federal inquiry.

"The reason why Jeffrey Gilbert is still

incarcerated is because the law enforcement personnel who apprehended him themselves committed a crime," said Mauri Saalakhan, of the Coalition Against Police Brutality.

Police released Gilbert on June 5, 39 days after they arrested him.

Brian Williams is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 27 in Cheverly, Maryland. Candace Wagner contributed to this article.

Governor signs death warrant for Abu-Jamal

Continued from front page
while serving on the Philadelphia police force and a female juror married to a cop.

At the time of his arrest, Abu-Jamal was a prominent radio reporter in this city. The *Philadelphia Inquirer*, a major daily, recognized him as, "an eloquent activist not afraid to raise his voice." At the time of his arrest, Abu-Jamal was president of the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists. He was particularly noted for his probing of the 1978 police assault on the home occupied by the MOVE organization, which left a police officer dead. Nine MOVE members were convicted of that killing and given 30-100-year sentences.

At his trial the prosecutors tried to prove that Abu-Jamal ran up behind Faulkner and shot him in the back. According to the prosecution, when Faulkner fell, Abu-Jamal stood over him and emptied his revolver into the officer. Once down, Faulkner shot back. Then Abu-Jamal supposedly sat down on the curb and waited for the police backup to arrive.

The prosecution claims that Abu-Jamal's gun was the murder weapon. Police ballistic experts, however, testified that the bullets that killed Faulkner and others recovered at the scene could not be

matched to Abu-Jamal's gun. Fingerprints on the gun did not match Abu-Jamal's.

Four witnesses reported a third man at the scene shot Faulkner and fled. "These four people were effectively silenced through coercion and harassment," explains Abu-Jamal's defense team.

The prosecution's "star" witnesses were prostitutes, who identified Mumia Abu-Jamal as the shooter, but also made contradictory statements. They testified they were offered deals — "the right to work their corner unmolested by the police in exchange for testimony fingering Mumia."

The Mumia Abu-Jamal defense effort has received international support from human rights organizations, students, labor unions, political groups, and others fighting for his life from the United States to Germany to South Africa. Tens of thousands of people have signed petitions or sent individual letters to Pennsylvania officials demanding Abu-Jamal not be executed.

Among Abu-Jamal's supporters are Ossie Davis and Mike Farrell who co-chair the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal. Others include Harry Belafonte, Whoopi Goldberg, State Rep. David

Richardson, Rep. Ron Dellums, and Cyril Ramaphosa, secretary general of the African National Congress.

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the National Conference of Black Lawyers have all written letters or filed legal briefs questioning the fairness of his trial.

Press conferences and rallies were held June 5 in Philadelphia; New York; Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; and other cities.

Some 350 people attended the rally at Philadelphia City Hall. "This is just a fight on another front. Don't panic," Abu-Jamal urged in a taped message to his supporters.

Weinglass joined the rally after submitting an appeal for a new trial. "This 300-page appeal proves that Abu-Jamal never had a trial. He didn't have a defense lawyer. He didn't have an impartial judge. And the jury was racially selected," he stated.

Weinglass is also filing motions with the Post-Conviction Review Appeal (PCRA) including a request that Judge Albert Sabo recuse himself from the review. Sabo consistently hears his own PCRA's, which is unusual among Philadelphia

judges. Known to members of the bar as the "prosecutor in robes," Sabo sentenced Mumia to death, and has sentenced more people to death, 31, than any other judge in the country, all but two of whom were non-white.

"The papers that we filed are very powerful. We are strong on the law. We are strong on the facts," Weinglass said. "But is that enough?"

He continued, "If they can succeed in executing Mumia — with all the questions about his innocence and whether he got a fair trial, it will be very difficult to mount successful cases for anyone else."

Mark Curtis sends message to defense rally for Abu-Jamal

The following is a message from Mark Curtis that was read at the March 28 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, rally in defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

I join with you in condemning Pennsylvania's moves to execute Mumia Abu-Jamal. Demanding blood for the death of a policeman, the capitalist legal system demonstrates the class nature of "justice" in this country.

Abu-Jamal worked to expose the government slaughter of the MOVE group. The Clinton administration used very similar actions against the followers of the David Koresh cult in Waco, Texas. We can expect further such attacks against unpopular targets.

The increase in death penalty laws around the U.S. and the so-called anti-crime packages of state and federal governments are aimed at narrowing our democratic rights and intimidating working-class fighters and young rebels like Abu-Jamal.

Stop the execution!
Justice for Abu-Jamal!
End the death penalty!

Mark Curtis
Iowa State Penitentiary
Fort Madison, Iowa

New York meetings support death row activist, cops campaign for his execution

BY JACK WILLEY

NEW YORK — As part of a stepped up defense campaign in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal two successful events took place here May 21. Jamal was a radio reporter in Philadelphia in 1982 when he was convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of a Philadelphia police officer.

More than 300 people attended a public reading of his recently published book, *Live from Death Row*, at Cooper Union. The event was produced by the Equal Justice USA/Quixote Center and WBAI public radio, and sponsored by the International Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Free Mumia Coalition of New York City.

A broad array of speakers addressed the crowd, including Melvin Van Peebles, director of the movie *Panther*; attorney William Kuntzler; Leonard Weinglass, Jamal's chief counsel; and Ramona Africa from MOVE. Abu-Jamal sent an audio

tape in order to speak to those at the meeting who had come out for his defense.

The Cooper Union meeting touched on a number of topics relating to Abu-Jamal's case, including the role of the FBI and its Cointelpro campaign against the Black Panther Party, of which Abu-Jamal was a member. The readings also addressed the way the U.S. government uses the death penalty against political prisoners and members of oppressed nationalities.

That same evening at the Atlantic Theater dozens of Abu-Jamal's supporters turned out for a \$250-a-head fund-raiser for his legal defense fund.

Outside of the Atlantic Theater event, about 50 police officers from New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia marched in protest. Cops and others have been waging a counter-campaign demanding that Abu-Jamal be executed. They have organized demonstrations and are promoting a boycott against Addison-Wesley, the publisher of *Live from Death Row*.

Maureen Faulkner, the widow of the slain policeman Abu-Jamal is accused of murdering, is leading a campaign for his execution and opposes his right to publish a book. "He's a convicted murderer," she declared. "Just as felons lose their right to vote, I think that by taking another man's life he forfeits the right to freedom of speech.

"I think it is immoral to reward a convicted cop killer financially," she added.

Abu-Jamal, who denies killing Daniel Faulkner and whose defense notes that several witnesses saw another man fleeing the scene of the crime, was assigned by National Public Radio (NPR) to do six monthly commentaries last year. The Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police and Maureen Faulkner organized a public campaign to force NPR to cancel the program.

Jack Willey is a member of the Young Socialists in New York.

Supporters reach out to help fund SWP

BY NAOMI CRAINE

"We're really gratified with the response we've been getting," said Sara Gates, a leader of the active supporter auxiliary of the Socialist Workers Party in Seattle. Gates was speaking about an effort to increase monthly contributions to the SWP by supporters and friends of the party. These pledges from 25 people in the Seattle area now add more than \$1,500 per month to the party's finances nationally, up from \$695 before the fund raising campaign began.

The supporters in Seattle are asking others to contribute, and are aiming for a monthly total of \$1,670, or \$20,000 annually. "Many people were waiting to be asked" to make a pledge, Gates said. "They appreciated being able to concretely express support for the party."

The fund-raising in Seattle is part of a national effort launched at a meeting of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee in April. Initially the goal was to increase monthly pledges from party supporters to a total of \$100,000 per year by June 30, compared to \$83,000 contributed in this way in 1994.

By the time the SWP National Committee met again at the beginning of June, the \$100,000 goal was already surpassed by more than \$9,000. In his report to the meeting, SWP national trade union director Joel Britton proposed new targets of increasing the pledges to an annual level of \$150,000 by July 12 and \$200,000 by October 1.

These goals were adopted, along with a proposal to urge all party branches to set targets for the recruitment of active supporters in their area and set a total monthly goal of pledges from supporters and friends of the party.

The National Committee meeting also voted to invite all members of active supporters groups to attend the party's convention, which will be held July 8-12 in Oberlin, Ohio.

Increasing firepower of movement

"As we raise the money we will be increasing the political firepower of our movement," Britton said in his report. "Not just because we will strengthen our bedrock sustaining funds....We will also have more people committed to doing one thing or another actively, politically, with



A display of revolutionary books published by Pathfinder at Mexico City bookfair. Members and active supporters of Socialist Workers Party helped to staff the booth.

and for the Socialist Workers Party, whether it's work to defend the Cuban revolution or helping us sell Pathfinder literature."

The SWP's 1990 political resolution explains that active supporters are members of the socialist movement who meet monthly and carry out various activities in support of the party's program and campaigns — getting out socialist literature, helping with the Socialist Workers election efforts, participating in activities in defense of Cuba, and other political work — but not on the weekly rhythm of party members.

"Above all the work of active supporters includes systematic fund-raising from friends of the party and from active supporters themselves, which they organize and review with party leaders as part of their periodic meetings," the resolution states.

To help launch the fund-raising campaign, Britton met with the active supporters group in Los Angeles, which along with the executive committee of the Los Angeles branch decided to take responsibility for organizing and leading the effort nationally.

A May 27 letter to SWP branches

signed by Britton, Jan Gangel for the Los Angeles active supporters group, and John Benson for the Los Angeles branch executive committee, noted that income from regular contributions by supporters and friends is an important part of the party's national operating budget, adding substantially to the weekly contributions made by party members to sustain local and national activity. The letter pointed to the initial success in several cities.

Getting positive results

Jeri Mullen, an active supporter in Chicago, said the results of calling potential contributors there have been very positive so far. "It's been easy to get people to

commit some resources," she said, "and we haven't reached everyone yet."

Mullen said the calling was valuable, even when it didn't result in immediate pledges. "I talked to a couple who have been attending the Militant Labor Forums and support the work of the party. They didn't think they could give a monthly pledge until they finish school, but said they would like to contribute to special funds."

The campaign has helped build the active supporters group in Chicago, Mullen noted. Three people have recently decided to become active supporters of the SWP there. Encouraged by their success so far, the active supporters in Chicago plan to discuss how to have more ongoing political contact with other party supporters in the area, Mullen said.

The campaign is an opportunity to ask long-term readers of the *Militant* and *Pathfinder* books, workers who have had ongoing political relationships with party members and support the party's campaigns, and others to take a step in formalizing a relationship with the party. Active supporters groups plan to work more with these friends of the party. "We want to more regularly keep them up to date on what's happening politically," said Gates in Seattle.

Gates said she thought the fund-raising in Seattle was getting a positive response because "it seems like there's a bit more happening." More young people have been coming to Militant Labor Forums and joining the Young Socialists there, she said, and "the political will is there" to support the socialist movement.

Readers who would like to make a monthly pledge as part of this effort can contact the nearest branch of the Socialist Workers Party, listed on page 12.



PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

By Sara Lobman

Pathfinder, located in New York with distributors in Australia, Britain, and Canada, publishes books and pamphlets by revolutionary fighters whose struggles against capitalism, racism, and all forms of exploitation and oppression point the way forward for humanity. Pathfinder bookstores are listed in the directory on page 12.

Four sales representatives visited 25 bookstores and libraries in Houston and Dallas during a week-long effort to increase sales of Pathfinder titles in Texas. They met with buyers at 5 college bookstores, 14 commercial bookstores, and 5 libraries. More than \$1,000 in orders were placed directly with Pathfinder. In addition, many bookstore representatives marked titles they plan to get through one of the major wholesalers that carry Pathfinder's books.

A Spanish-language bookstore that used to carry only religious books and periodicals has recently expanded its inventory to include history, politics, and biography. On two earlier visits, the owner had decided not to carry any Pathfinder books. This time he put in an order for seven titles, including *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* (Socialism and man in Cuba), *Nelson Mandela: Intensifiquemos la lucha* (Nelson Mandela: Intensify the struggle), *Qué lejos hemos llegado los esclavos* (How far we slaves have come), and all four issues of *Nueva Internacional*.

Managers at four of the college and university bookstores told the Pathfinder representatives they had decided to substantially increase the number of trade books they carried. "Students don't just want to read text books," one explained. At another bookstore, after looking through the catalog, the manager excitedly called over a student who works at the store to get his help in selecting titles.

"I think a lot of people will be interested in this," he said after reading the

back cover of *New International* no 10, which includes the articles "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War" and "Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution." Together they picked out 11 titles, ordering two of most. These included: *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics, Fighting Racism in World War II, Malcolm X Talks to Young People, Genocide Against the Indians, and Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*.

In a busy bookstore in Dallas that orients primarily towards the Black community, the owner reported that *Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom* was selling well. The store already carries Pathfinder's Malcolm X titles, as well as books of speeches by Nelson Mandela, Thomas Sankara, and Maurice Bishop. In addition to restocking some of these titles, she decided to try: *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics, Fighting Racism in World War II, and The Jewish Question*, by Abram Leon.

Ever since the *L.A. Weekly* ran a feature article on the Los Angeles Pathfinder bookstore in its May 12-18 issue (see *Militant* issue no. 22) "people who had never heard of us before have been coming in," Craig Honts reports. In one day alone, nine copies of *New International* were sold to these new customers.

"I have just finished reading *Two Speeches by Malcolm X* and on the last page of the book I noticed many different books that caught my interest," Duane Coleman said in a recent letter. "I am asking and hoping that you can send me an order form along with a catalog. I am in the Navy Seabees and we move around a lot. There are very many of us that would like to acquire these reading materials of knowledge."

Patti Iiyama and Margrethe Siem from Houston contributed to this column.

Governor leads assaults on affirmative action

BY JIM ALTBURG

SAN FRANCISCO — California's governor, Pete Wilson, fired another salvo against affirmative action by signing an executive order June 1 abolishing some programs and limiting others. The order prohibits preferential treatment based on race or gender not required by law, changes hiring standards in state government, and eliminates a state forestry program that aimed to hire nearly 1,000 Black, Latino, and female workers for summer fire fighting jobs.

Wilson surrounded himself with firefighters from the California Department of Forestry as he signed the order. The new edict also cut in half the money the highway department was required to spend with minority and women-owned contractors, and changed a number of state hiring goals to the detriment of women and oppressed nationalities. Many of the boards and policies eliminated were in place under executive orders signed by the three previous governors.

In a move that was also aimed at revitalizing his flagging presidential election campaign, Wilson issued an open letter to Californians a day before signing the order repeating the demagogic claims that affirmative action is divisive and discriminatory.

"Almost every American can sense the tension and unfairness this system of racial spoils has produced," he wrote. "[Affirmative action] is not recognition of individual merit. It pits group against group, race against race, eroding the American ideal that anyone who works hard and plays by the rules has an equal

chance to achieve the American dream.

"The current system of special privilege based on race and gender is breeding resentment from those left standing on the sidelines," Wilson said.

The scope of his executive order was limited because many affirmative action programs in place are required by state and federal laws, and cannot be ended by order of the governor. His moves are part of a nationwide drive against affirmative action gains that has been echoed with particular force in California.

Opponents of affirmative action plan a petition drive to place the so-called California Civil Rights Initiative, which would "eliminate race and gender preferences in government hiring, education and contracting," on the November 1996 ballot. Wilson supports passage of the proposal.

College campuses have been the focus of much of the debate on affirmative action and Wilson's letter urged California universities to do away with affirmative action in hiring and adopt a so-called merit based system. Administrators at the University of California and California State University systems have undertaken reviews of their affirmative action policies.

The Board of Regents of the University of California will soon discuss a proposal by Regent Ward Connerly to end current affirmative action programs in university admissions and hiring. Connerly, who is Black, has said that minority admissions policies lowered academic standards and were an insult to qualified students of color. Protest actions in defense of affirmative action have taken place on campuses throughout California.

Managers at four of the college and university bookstores told the Pathfinder representatives they had decided to substantially increase the number of trade books they carried. "Students don't just want to read text books," one explained. At another bookstore, after looking through the catalog, the manager excitedly called over a student who works at the store to get his help in selecting titles.

"I think a lot of people will be interested in this," he said after reading the

'Festival is symbol of Cuba's strength'

BY BOB AIKEN

SYDNEY, Australia — The Cuba Lives International Youth Festival set for August 1-7 is "a symbol of how strong and firm we are in Cuba," Alejandro Herrera Agete told a public meeting of 100 people May 30 at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). "We are opening ourselves up to the youth of the world so they can see the realities of Cuba with their own eyes."

Herrera, 27, is a leader of the Union of Young Communists in Havana province. His 11-day visit to Australia concluded June 2. The youth leader has traveled to New Zealand for the second leg of his Pacific speaking tour; he has also been invited to visit the Philippines.

Promoting the international festival was at the center of Herrera's visit here. "You will have a chance to exchange ideas with Cuban young people, to see not only Havana but other cities, and at last touch with your own hands what people have only heard about through the mass media, which presents a picture of Cuba as hell, a despotic country, drowning," he said.

Herrera's trip was coordinated by the Cuban Youth Tour Committee, which included student organizations, academics, and supporters of the Cuban revolution. For many of the 300 people who attended the tour meetings, including students who helped organize speaking engagements at five universities, this was their first opportunity to hear someone representing the Cuban revolution.

80 sign up for information

By the end of the tour, 80 people had signed up for more information on the August festival and ongoing activities in support of the Cuban revolution.

Herrera set the tone at all the meetings he addressed here by stressing, after brief introductory remarks, that he was open to answering any questions or doubts that people might have about Cuba. "The Cuban revolution exists, firm, solid, and ready to talk with anyone who approaches it," was how he put it at the UTS meeting,



Militant/Argiris Malapanis
Volunteers at El Paraíso camp in Cuba. "A spirit of working for the revolution exists" among Cuban workers, Alejandro Herrera told students in Sydney, Australia.

which was chaired by Juan Miranda, the Non-English-Speaking Students Officer of the Students Association there.

"Cuba has two basic weapons," Herrera said, in response to a question at the UTS meeting on how Cuba was surviving the deep economic crisis brought about by the collapse in trade with the former Soviet Union, and the tightening of the economic and trade embargo organized by the U.S. government. "The first is the confidence that the people have in the revolution, and the other is what people are doing every day in order to save the revolution."

"A normal day for a Cuban may not be a very happy day," he continued. "Very little transport to get to work, several hours without electric power in the house, a reduced shopping basket of basic goods,

and fewer recreational and leisure activities.

"You have to have a very great trust in the revolution to continue to defend it in such circumstances, as it is being defended today," he said. "A spirit of working for the revolution exists," among the working people of Cuba.

Another participant at the UTS meeting asked if the Cuban government, by opening the country to tourism and joint ventures with foreign capital, was following a "pseudocapitalist" policy like the Chinese government. "This is not the Cuba we want, nor is it the kind of measures we have taken," Herrera said. "In Cuba we still talk about voluntary work, sacrifice and commitment to a cause, the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is social

ownership of the means of production."

The Cuban government "sits down very calmly with those who want to invest in the country," he said, "and lays out its socialist conditions."

Another questioner asked about Herrera's view of developments in Nicaragua. "Cuba has taken on what happened in Nicaragua with great pain," the youth leader said. "What is true is that the Nicaraguan revolution no longer exists," he continued. "This makes the transformations for social justice for that country and the Caribbean area more distant, and this is a cause for sorrow for true Marxists."

Revolution rests on its supporters

Herrera fielded a range of questions on democratic rights and toleration of dissent in Cuba at all of the meetings.

"The revolution does not rest on attacking those who do not support it," he said at a meeting of 65 sponsored by the Hispania Society at the University of New South Wales May 30. "It rests with those who support it, and when they are a minority the revolution will fall. There are people in Cuba who oppose the revolution, who want capitalism, private property, a chance to get rich," Herrera continued. "The revolution was made to take power from these people."

Asked about events that took place in Cuba last August when anti-government riots occurred in Havana, he responded that it was important that this had been answered, not by sending in the army and the police, but by supporters of the revolution mobilizing to confront the anti-government rioters. "There is a more powerful force than the army, police, and government, and that is the people who made the revolution," he said.

Herrera's tour received some national media. A meeting to report on the whole Pacific tour is planned in Sydney, June 29.

Bob Aiken is a member of the Australian Workers Union - Federation of Industrial, Manufacturing and Engineering Employees in Sydney.

Cuba youth leader visits Maori land occupation

BY TERRY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Alejandro Herrera Agete began a 12-day tour of New Zealand June 3 with a visit to a Maori land occupation near Huntly, a coal-mining town south of Auckland.

The Cuban youth leader is speaking on the challenges facing the Cuban revolution today. His six-city tour is being coordinated by the Cuba Friendship Society.

"Like you, the Cuban people have fought for their land and their independence," Herrera told 50 people who gathered to greet him. Leaders of the Ngati Whawhakia tribe had organized a formal Maori welcome ceremony for Herrera on their marae (meeting place) at Te Kauri Pa near Huntly. The meeting place is adjacent to land being occupied by members of the tribe to press their demand for its return.

The marae consists of a large carved meeting house, a dining facility, a Maori-language kindergarten, and a large grass area where the welcome ceremony took place. Many members of the tribe live in residential housing surrounding the marae.

Following the welcome speeches and songs, Herrera and his tour party presented their hosts with a copy of *How Far We Slaves Have Come*, a book of speeches delivered in Cuba by African National Congress president Nelson Mandela and Cuban president Fidel Castro.

After lunch, Herrera was escorted to the occupation site, a hill which commands views of the surrounding district. Local Maoris and supporters occupied the site April 26. The land was part of 1.2 million acres confiscated by the government in 1863. Coalcorp, a state-owned mining corporation in the process of being privatized, now controls the land. Twenty of the young occupiers welcomed Herrera by performing a war dance.

"We have the same enemy, capitalism. It takes our land, labor, whatever it needs. The only thing that can stop it is us," Herrera told participants in the occupation. Robert Tukiri, a leader of the occupation, said, "It was capitalism that cost us our land last century."

An occupier was interested to learn that,

while ownership title to land in Cuba can be held by individuals or cooperatives that work it, land is not a commodity that can be bought or sold on the market. "That's the way it should be," she commented.

Another occupier asked about raft-borne departure of people from Cuba seeking to reach the United States last year. Herrera reviewed the history of the U.S. government encouraging such illegal entry, including by hijacking, while refusing legal entry to Cubans who sought it. "That was an important weapon they used against our revolution, but now we have broken it," he said, referring to the recent agreement between Havana and Washington binding U.S. authorities to grant 20,000 visas for entry into the United States, and to treat Cuban emigrants by the same legal criteria as those from other countries.

On his return to Auckland that evening, Herrera met with representatives of the Latin American community at a social event attended by 500 people. The social was part of a two-day Latin American cultural festival, *Fiesta Del Sol*, attended by people from throughout New Zealand.

A stall at the festival promoted Herrera's upcoming meetings and the Cuba Lives International Youth Festival to be held in Havana August 1-7.

Terry Coggan is a member of the Meat Workers Union in Auckland.

Herrera is a leader of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) in Cuba and was the featured speaker at the June 4 workshop.

In his presentation, Herrera explained some of the enormous difficulties facing Cuba today due to the collapse of trade with the Soviet Union in 1991. Despite the preferential trade agreements with the former Soviet Union, Herrera said, Cuba "did not take advantage of the opportunity when the resources were available to use them to build up industry as much as we could have." The Cuban youth leader added that the economic crisis is exacerbated by hostility from the U.S. government, "which has never forgiven Cuba for making the revolution."

Several participants in the workshop asked Herrera about individual freedom and human rights in Cuba. The youth leader issued an invitation to everyone to visit Cuba and attend the International Youth festival being organized by Cuban youth organizations August 1-7. He added that those who disagree with the revolution are free to do so by peaceful means, although they may be hotly debated by others. He contrasted Cuba's human rights record with the recent history of many Latin American countries where open dissent often led to people disappearing.

Once the session finished, about 20 people stayed on to continue the discussion. One participant had read a review of the Cuban film *Strawberry and Chocolate*. One of the main characters in the film is gay, and the questioner wanted to know what the revolution's attitude on homosexuality is. Herrera replied that while gay people have the same rights as everyone else, there continues to be prejudice on the part of individual attitudes.

Dean Hazlewood is a member of the New Zealand Meat Workers Union. Ruth Gray, a member of the Engineers Union, also contributed to this article.

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New York rally says stop deportation of Irish immigrants

BY MARY NELL BOCKMAN AND ANDY BUCHANAN

NEW YORK — One hundred fifty people protested in front of the federal building in Manhattan June 3 demanding that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) stop deportation proceedings against 20 Irish political activists living in the United States. The British government continues to demand their return to the United Kingdom to face frame-up trials or serve out sentences for convictions under British occupation of Northern Ireland.

Gabriel Megahey, one of the activists facing deportation who has lived in the United States for 20 years, marched with his wife and daughter, both U.S. citizens. He explained that the INS recently decided that his conviction on charges of attempting to ship arms to the Irish Republican Army in 1981 could be used as the basis for deportation, despite a federal court decision to the contrary. A final decision will be made in his case in late summer.

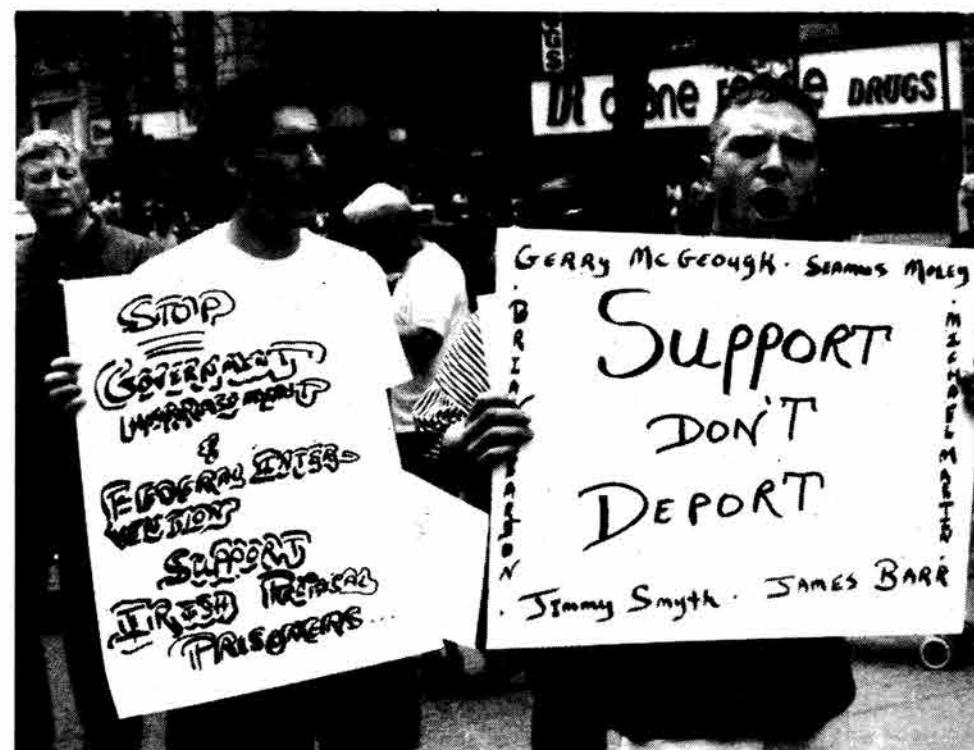
Martin Galvin, a member of the National Executive Committee of Irish Northern Aid (INA), said at the rally,

"These men are being victimized by our government at the behest of the British government. It is wrong to sacrifice fundamental justice because the British government wants their heads on a platter. America should not be sending them back to face persecution."

Many participants wore the green ribbons of the Saoirse/Freedom campaign, which has organized rallies and marches in Ireland, Britain, and the United States to demand freedom for all Irish political prisoners. Eight hundred activists remain in prison in Ireland, Britain, Germany, and the United States. Signs and chants at the demonstration demanded freedom for the nearly two dozen in U.S. jails.

The previous day, more than 800 people gathered in Astoria, Queens, for a banquet celebrating the 25th anniversary of Irish Northern Aid. The group campaigns to raise financial and political support for Irish republican political prisoners and their families.

Supporters from New York were joined by delegations from Philadelphia, Boston, and Connecticut.



Protest demanding end to deportation of Irish activists June 3 in New York City

Joe Cahill, joint national treasurer of Sinn Fein and a founder of Irish Northern Aid, addressed the gathering. Thanking INA for its efforts, Cahill explained that mobilizing support for the Irish freedom struggle in the United States was "critical and necessary to help us gain peace and justice in Ireland. We want to see the people of Ireland united, whether Catholic, Protestant, or Dissenter, those with religion or with no religion."

To loud cheers, Cahill said, "We are now in the final phase of the struggle for freedom in Ireland." He cautioned, however, that "Irish Northern Aid's role is as crucial as ever. There can be no let up as long as there are prisoners in Britain, Ireland, Europe, or here. We want them home!" Cahill also urged support for those facing deportation and demanded an end to U.S. government persecution of Irish activists.

Thousands protest Prince Charles' tour of Ireland

BY DEBBIE DELANGE

DUBLIN, Ireland — The first official royal tour of Ireland since 1911 was marked by protests when Prince Charles visited here May 31.

Several thousand people turned out to a march organized by Dublin Against Royal Tour (DART). This was "more than we ever imagined," Pat Tierney, DART's press officer, told the *Militant*. As the protesters crossed O'Connell Bridge they threw a black coffin marked "Great Hunger — 1845 to 1849" into the river Liffey. "This symbolized our desire for an end to British imperialism's interference in Ireland," said Tierney.

"Prince Charles is colonel-in-chief of the Parachute Regiment," explained Tierney, "which has killed 45 people during the last 25 years, including the victims of the Bloody Sunday Massacre in Derry in 1972. We opened a book, a Petition for Justice for the 45 Victims, and asked people to sign it each day of the royal visit. Some 5,000 signed in all."

The prince's visit was the dominant issue in Irish politics during the week, receiving substantial media coverage in news articles, editorials, and opinion pages.

The visit was hailed by Irish prime minister John Bruton as the most significant event in his lifetime, "to exorcise and sweep away the suspicion that existed between our two nations." Hundreds of po-

lice were on standby after firebombs were discovered in Dublin and outside the former holiday home of Lord Mountbatten, the Prince's great-uncle, who was killed by an Irish Republican Army bomb in 1979.

Relatives of Bloody Sunday victims handed a letter to a senior British embassy official at a reception for the prince at Dublin Castle, once the center of British rule in Ireland, calling for justice.

"They didn't get justice," Tierney said "but the people of Derry felt it was effective. The previous day the lord mayor of Dublin, John Gormley, said DART was made up of diehards, which we found offensive. He met with the relatives and apologized to them. Now he's going to go with them to the monument in Derry 'to atone' for his remarks."

There is newspaper speculation that London will carry on cementing its relations with the Dublin government with a tour of the queen. "DART is asleep now," said Tierney, "but if his mother visits she can expect a larger and more vocal protest!"

"The throwing of missiles was not organized by DART," he continued. Eggs had been thrown at the prince during a short walk. "But I understand people's frustration when he didn't acknowledge the wrongs done by the Paras or express any remorse."

The prince has joined in the campaign by British rulers to free Pvt. Lee Clegg, a paratrooper who is appealing his prison sentence for killing teenage joyrider Karen Reilly. Clegg is the only paratrooper to be convicted of murder in Ire-

land in 25 years. Many supporters of Saoirse, which fights for the release of Irish political prisoners, referred to this during the campaign's national conference, held here June 3.

Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), condemned the royal visit as out of place as long as the Irish constitution "is claiming part of the realm" of the United Kingdom, meaning Northern Ireland. The DUP is the second largest pro-British party in Northern Ireland. Robinson declared that the royal family was being used by a "treacherous government" to hand over Northern Ireland to the Republic.

Debbie Delange is a member of the National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers in Manchester, England.

Youth festival: 'See Cuba for yourself'

BY LAURA GARZA

Come see Cuba for yourself. That has been the invitation offered from Brazil to the Philippines, from Nicaragua to the United States, as representatives of Cuban youth groups have been traveling around the world discussing the Cuban revolution and learning about conditions of life and the struggles of workers and youth in other countries. They are encouraging young

people and others to attend the Cuba Lives International Youth Festival in Havana August 1-7. Francisco Beteta Herrera, a leader of the Union of Young Communists in Cuba on tour in Nicaragua in May, said they expect at least 1,000 participants from five continents at the event.

And many people are now making plans to get to Cuba. In the Twin Cities, Minnesota, 10 students and other young people have said they want to go. A program of summer activities around Cuba is being organized by the newly formed Twin Cities Cuba Network, including a celebration of the launching of the Cuban revolution, marked by the assault by young rebels led by Fidel Castro on the Moncada barracks on July 26, 1953. The gathering will be a fund-raiser for the Minnesota delegation to the Cuba Lives festival.

The first meeting of the network included leaders of the Guatemala Solidarity Committee, Veterans for Peace, Twin Cities U.S./Cuba Friendship Committee, and Socialist Workers Party, as well as students from the University of Minnesota, Normaldale Community College, and Minneapolis Community College.

The group is also concentrating on building one of four regional demonstrations on October 14 to protest the U.S. embargo of Cuba. The demonstrations will take place in Atlanta, Chicago, New York, and San Francisco.

In Chicago several youth are planning fund-raising activities, including some Guatemalan activists who heard Cuban youth leader Kenia Serrano when she visited there recently. Two Lane Tech High

School students and three students from the University of Illinois at Champaign also hope to make the trip.

Sylvia Villacis is a Cuban-American student at Florida International University in Miami who is planning to be there when the festival opens. "I've never been to Cuba before. The festival will be a special opportunity to experience Cuba and participate in the discussions going on there," she said.

The Miami Committee Against the U.S. Embargo of Cuba is promoting participation in the festival and helping to raise funds for Miami youth to be in Havana when youth from around the world gather to show their solidarity with Cuba.

The Cuba Information Project in New York is coordinating travel arrangements for those who want to participate in the festival. The cost of the trip from Nassau, Bahamas, or Cancún, Mexico, will be \$550, including round-trip airfare to Cuba and meals and lodging during the festival. The departure is planned for July 30. For more information call 212-227-3422.

Many participants are contacting local media outlets to explain the opportunity to have a first-hand report from a worldwide gathering of youth standing up to defend Cuba. Activists pointed out that getting an editorial assignment from a local paper or radio station is possible in every city and is an aid to beginning the work of telling the truth about what they saw in Cuba immediately upon their return.

Jon Hillson in the Twin Cities, Frank Forrestal in Chicago, and Seth Galinsky in Miami contributed to this article.

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Brazil oil workers: 'We go back united'

Continued from front page

Petrobrás resumed June 6.

"If there is an impasse or flouting of any decision [on the part of the authorities], we would be ready to go back on strike," FUP president Antonio Spis told the daily *Jornal do Brasil*.

Many workers are angry at the regime, which did its utmost to try to crush the strike. At the beginning of the fight, "I still had hope," said Adriano Batista, 31, who works at the Rio de Janeiro refinery. But since the day the Supreme Labor Tribunal ruled the work stoppage illegal, "I no longer expect anything from this government," he stated.

The strike began May 3, when 47,000 workers shut down 11 refineries around the country. They demanded the Cardoso administration abide by a contract the government signed last September granting a wage increase. The struggle also took on a broader character in opposition to the regime's plans to sell off major shares of Petrobrás to foreign and Brazilian capitalists, lay off thousands of workers, and accelerate production.

After the suspension of the strike, government officials stated they would press ahead with this economic plan.

The oil workers' strike became the first major political crisis of the Cardoso administration. "It was the longest strike in our union's history," said Antonio Carrara, a worker at the Paulínia refinery, in a phone interview from the union headquarters in Campinas, near São Paulo. This action followed and overlapped with a series of work stoppages by other industrial workers totaling as many as 300,000 strikers.

Despite enormous pressures, few workers crossed the picket lines. Brazil's capitalists deployed all their class weapons to attack the strikers, from the courts to the media, which tried to turn public opinion against the unionists by blaming them for gas shortages. When this intimidation failed, the government sent in the army to occupy four plants, including three in the state of São Paulo.

The union ranks countered every move by the government. For example, at the strike headquarters in Campinas, unionists showed visiting *Militant* reporters petitions they had drawn up to protest the company's selective firing of strikers. The "Petition for Collective Dismissal" demanded the authorities either fire all 47,000 oil workers or none. At the Paulínia plant, half the workforce of 1,000 signed the protest letter.

Activity at army-occupied plant

The strength of the strike was evident June 1 from the main entrance to the Paulínia refinery, which was occupied by the army. Dozens of soldiers and several tanks and armored vehicles could be seen inside the plant. But only two buses and a few cars with workers left and entered the refinery at shift change.

"They mainly have engineers and technicians operating the refinery, together with a few strikebreakers," explained striker Severino Cosmos Bezerra, who was staffing an information tent outside the plant gate along with a few other unionists. "Only one distillation unit of the four production units is operating. It produces a little, which is probably below quality and therefore unsellable."

At about 1:00 a.m. that day, Bezerra reported, an explosion in the plant caused a fire, revealing the poor conditions of the scab-run operation. Carrara and several other strikers stayed up all night to help put out the fire. "The company might have tried to blame the union for sabotage," Carrara explained.

Strikers in Campinas reached out for and won broader backing among working people in this heavily industrialized area. "We've received solidarity from metalworkers, bus drivers, city workers, shoe workers, hotel employees, electrical workers, and many others," said Bezerra.

Chemical workers and postal workers, for example, distributed a leaflet that explained the stakes involved in the strike and reproduced copies of oil workers' modest paychecks to answer the lie that the strikers were a greedy and highly paid

labor aristocracy.

The leaflet explained that in opposing the sell-off of the oil company, the strikers were also "defending the people's patrimony." It drew attention to "the example of what has happened in Mexico, Argentina, and Chile," whose governments have opened up their countries' economies to greater imperialist investment, laying off thousands and slashing wages in the process.

Another show of solidarity came from a community of 80 peasants at nearby Sumaré, who brought the oil strikers truckloads of vegetables and fruit. "These farmers used to be landless," union president Marques explained. "Ten years ago they occupied a plot of land and fought for it. Our union supported them. Through the Movement of Landless Rural Workers, they won the right to the land, and now they are supporting us."

Regime escalates attacks

As the duration of the strike approached one month, the Cardoso regime escalated its attack. It threatened to carry out mass firings, while Petrobrás placed ads in newspapers announcing it would start hiring replacement workers.

Attorney General Moacir Machado da Silva said union officials could be charged with criminal offenses and sentenced to up to three years in prison under laws barring the interruption of utilities "serving the collective interest" as well as the occupation of industrial facilities. This last threat was directed at the workers who had occupied the Cubatão refinery, near the coastal city of Santos in the state of São Paulo.

At the same time, each day the strikers held out, the Brazilian ruling class faced increasing problems. Some big-business commentators noted that while the initial government claims of gas shortages had been exaggerated to whip up public opinion against the oil workers, now the lack of fuel was becoming a real threat to public transportation and industry.

Editorials began to complain that the government was increasingly being viewed as responsible for prolonging the conflict and causing hardship to the population.

After the regime threatened mass dismissals, 1,500 strikers at the refinery in Bahia responded by occupying the plant June 1.

On May 31, the government for the first time indicated it might "review" the firings of dozens of strikers as part of negotiations with the union once the workers returned to their jobs. The next day, a group of congresspeople from several parties



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Oil workers at union hall in Campinas, near São Paulo. Strike overlapped with work stoppages in other industries, and was first major crisis for Cardoso government.

asked the government to resume negotiations.

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, president of the Workers Party (PT), which is tied to Brazil's union movement, sent a letter to Cardoso June 1 accusing him of "intransigence" and holding him responsible for prolonging the conflict.

On the other hand, Lula was quoted in *O Estado de São Paulo* as saying, following a May 30 meeting with United Federation of Workers (CUT) president Vicente Paulo da Silva, "If it was up to me or to Vicente, the strike would already be over, but it's up to the oil workers to decide." The capitalist media highlighted such comments.

The economist Aloisio Mercadante, a prominent PT leader, told the Buenos Aires daily *Clarín* on June 3, after the strike was called off, that "the workers made mistakes" and that "the union was unable to work public opinion."

On June 2, the leadership of the FUP recommended the suspension of the strike. Workers held union meetings around the country that day and voted to go back to work in order to resume negotiations. Workers at the Cubatão and São José dos Campos refineries initially voted to stay out until the dismissals were reversed; after a subsequent union meeting, they decided to join the other unionists by returning to work.

'We needed a truce'

At the four militarized refineries, workers returned to their jobs only after the government withdrew the troops.

"At our meeting, when we voted to go

back, the mood was not discouraged but spirited," Carrara reported in the June 6 phone interview. "But the strike was suspended because there were some who were tired. We needed a truce."

The day after the strike, the capitalist press in Brazil and elsewhere ran blaring headlines like "Cardoso crushes oil workers' strike." Declaring that the road is now clear to open up Petrobrás for private investment, some big-business commentators point to the next two goals of the government: to put other state-owned properties like telecommunications on the chopping block, and to get rid of the system of annual cost-of-living wage adjustments.

Other progovernment voices have been less triumphalist. "Cardoso knows he cannot celebrate very much the political victory over the oil workers strike," wrote one columnist in the June 3 *Jornal do Brasil*, remarking that according to opinion polls, at least one-third of those surveyed blamed the government for the conflict, not the strikers, and another third blamed both sides.

In fact, in recent weeks Cardoso has been met with angry demonstrators who have pelted him with rocks and eggs wherever he appears in public, including the weekend after the suspension of the oil strike.

"The strike has raised more debate and awareness in the broader population on social questions like oil as the national patrimony," unionist Carrara said. "Because of what we have done, there will be more resistance to the government's policies now than there was before the strike."

Students in Argentina protest austerity

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — Banging on drums and singing songs against the government, 20,000 students marched to the Argentine congress here June 7 to protest a new education bill proposed by president Carlos Menem. The measure introduces tuition fees for the first time in public universities and ends university autonomy. Thousands of students participated in similar mobilizations in Corrientes, Santa Fe, Paraná, Rosario, Tucumán, Salta, Córdoba, and other provinces.

Brushing aside the protesters, deputies adopted Menem's Law on Higher Education 112 to 15. Deputies of both major opposition parties walked out of congress in protest before the vote.

Thousands of furious students surrounding the building of the National Congress jeered and booed legislators when the vote was announced that night. Small groups of students pelted riot police with rocks. After the bulk of demonstrators left the scene, the cops attacked the students with high-pressure water cannon, chasing dozens into a nearby pizza parlor and beating several students.

"Education is our right, a social right, it must be free," said Melina Yangilevich, 23, who studies history at the National University of the Province of Buenos

Aires in Tandil. "Menem, if he has his way, will make it virtually impossible for any of us from the working class to be able to go to college." Yangilevich and 70 other students from her campus made the 250-mile trip to the capital "because no matter what happens we must stand for what we believe in — public education."

The bill introduces fees of up to \$300 per month. Each local university administration will set the amount of tuition, which it will be obligated to do since the federal government plans to drastically cut funding to public schools as part of implementing the new legislation. Tuition will also depend on the income of a student's family. Government officials point to this provision in their effort to win public support. The students' opposition to the introduction of tuition "is absurd," Menem told the Argentine daily *Clarín*, "because a fee for those who can pay a quota will benefit those who can't." He claimed that the new fees will help finance scholarships for students from working-class families.

This argument "is a fraud," said Yangilevich. "It's the state's responsibility to fund education for all. As it is, many of us can hardly afford to buy books and pay rent and transportation."

"Wages are very low, and unemployment is high," added Paula Parra, 20, a student of physical education, "especially for young people." The same day as the

vote on the education bill, the government announced that unemployment had climbed to nearly 14 percent at the end of May.

"The federal government will also have more power over the content of textbooks, class syllabi, course requirements, and when it can send cops into a school to put down a 'disturbance,'" said Nelson Fabian Torres, 21, from the University of La Plata. These decisions are now made by a council made up of elected representatives of students, alumni, and faculty. No single group can have more than 50 percent representation on the council.

The new legislation gives the executive branch of the government the power to pick the university councils with a majority composed of professors and deans. "This destroys university autonomy," Torres said.

The June 7 mobilizations were part of a series of student protests in the last few months, which included occupations of universities in Córdoba, La Rioja, and other provinces. The action that received the most publicity nationwide was a sit-down by 5,000 students around the National Congress June 1. The students blocked entrances to congress, preventing many deputies from entering and forcing the government to postpone discussion

Continued on Page 14

Black unionists hold national convention

BY SAM MANUEL

DETROIT — "Developing Strategies to Impact New Political Realities" was the theme of the 24th convention of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) held here at the end of May. More than 1,600 mostly Black trade unionists attended the convention, representing 77 international unions.

This new reality, according to several CBTU leaders and featured speakers, is the Republican majority in Congress. They argued that the clock would be "turned back" on social gains won by working people in this country, especially those who are Black, if the Republican majority is not defeated in the 1996 elections.

Republican leader Newt Gingrich and the package of Republican-sponsored legislation known as the Contract with America were described by speakers throughout the convention in varying degrees from "conservative" to "ultra-rightist." Several speakers from the floor who presented themselves as being more "radical and militant" argued that the Republican majority in Congress represented the beginnings of fascism.

Gloria Johnson, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, called Gingrich a "modern day Joe McCarthy." Matthew Finucane, executive director of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, declared that the goal of the Contract with America is to destroy the legacy of the Democratic-sponsored "New Deal."

Richard Womack, director of the Civil Rights Department of the AFL-CIO, pointed with alarm to the emergence of "right-wing anti-government kooks" who blow up federal buildings. He said that "rightist media commentators disguised as journalists" had inspired conditions that required "turning the White House into a fortress....Our answer to them is the vote."

1996 elections

The importance of getting out the vote for the Democratic party in the 1996 presidential elections was the central strategy presented at the convention.

Shavonne Perpina, a field representative for the American Federation of Labor-Council of Industrial Organizations, encouraged the delegates to "begin now" to prepare for the 1996 elections. James Ferguson of the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation added, "There are important elections in 1995 in which we can get practice for 1996."

Among the many topics discussed at the convention were affirmative action, health care, toxic dumping and the environment, women's rights, and unemployment. The discussions were often followed by the adoption of resolutions supporting Democratic Party legislation and policy on these issues.

Lorell Patterson of the United Paperworkers International Union local 7837 gave a brief address to the convention. She appealed for support for a June 25 demonstration by the union in Decatur, Illinois, against a lockout of the union members by the A.E. Staley Manufacturing Co. Strikers also distributed information from a literature table during that session. No resolution was passed in support of that strike or any other labor struggle during the five-day convention.

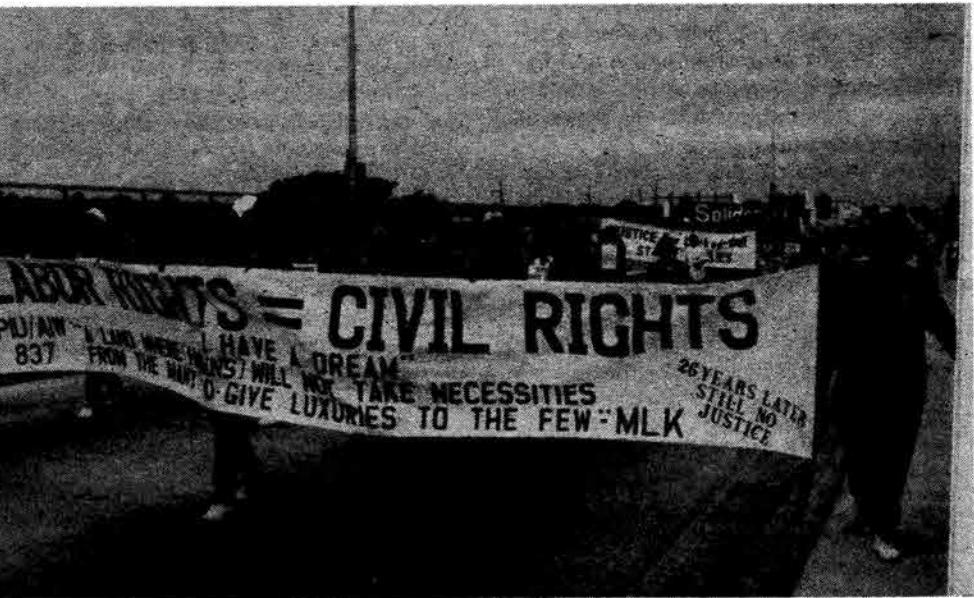
Affirmative action

A number of resolutions were passed in support of affirmative action. But several speakers during a panel on the topic stressed the need for "defensible" programs. Norman Hill, president of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute, said, "We are for affirmative action policies which unite us. Therefore the AFL-CIO has a long tradition of defending affirmative action programs without quotas."

Hill denounced what he called the use of affirmative action as a "wedge issue even in the union movement." Several speakers, among them Southern Christian Leadership Conference president Joseph Lowery and William Burrus, executive vice president of the American Postal Workers Union, had made remarks at the convention criticizing the lack of affirmative action measures within the top levels of the AFL-CIO.

A May 9 letter from AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland to President Bill Clinton calling for continued government support of affirmative action was made available to convention participants.

Ralph Jiminez, president of the Labor Council of Latin American Advancement, compared the attacks on affirmative action to the assaults on the rights of immigrant workers such as Proposition 187 in California. This act attempts to deny undocumented workers and their children access to health care, schools, and other social



Locked-out Staley workers at Decatur, Illinois, solidarity march, Oct. 15, 1994. CBTU heard report on paperworkers' struggle. Staley workers also distributed information at convention.

benefits.

Jiminez said these efforts are aimed at denying Blacks and Latinos the opportunity to enter the middle class, which "our unions have made possible."

Only Jiminez and a few speakers from the floor made any reference to Proposition 187. A resolution on affirmative action and immigrant rights was passed, but made no reference to the anti-immigrant initiative.

Debate on CBTU membership

A sharp discussion ensued on a proposal to allow unorganized workers to become associate members of the CBTU. The proposal was supported by delegates from local chapters in New York and northern California. Associate members would not hold office or be able to vote.

Supporters of the proposal argued that it would allow young people who make up a large portion of the unorganized workforce to become members of the CBTU. They also argued that the proposal should be adopted because members of other "ethnic" groups were fully participating in the convention.

Several leaders of the CBTU spoke against the proposal, including founding member Charles Hayes who charged that it would put the CBTU in competition with the AFL-CIO.

No discussion was organized on the depression level of unemployment faced by workers who are Black. Delegates re-

ceived a copy of a recent Bureau of Labor Statistics report that shows Black unemployment remains double that of whites at 10.7 percent. Unemployment for Black youth stands at 35.6 percent.

A resolution submitted by the CBTU Executive Council noted that 100,000 union members have contracts that allow employers to pay below the minimum wage of \$4.25 per hour. The resolution called on Congress to pass legislation increasing the minimum wage.

Increased financial aid to the African National Congress-led government in South Africa, support to the popular organizations in Haiti, and for the release of political prisoners in Nigeria were among several international resolutions approved by the convention.

A resolution on U.S. relations with Cuba stated: "For more than 30 years the U.S. has maintained an embargo against Cuba that has harmed the Cuban people by making it difficult for the Cuban people to have adequate food and medical supplies." It called upon Clinton to support a bill sponsored by Democratic congressman Charles Rangel and to "end the embargo and to normalize relations between the U.S. and Cuba...and allow Americans to travel freely to Cuba."

Other resolutions approved by the convention included opposition to capital punishment and school prayer, and support for statehood for the District of Columbia.

Chicago students say no to anti-immigrant laws

BY AISLINN PULLEY

CHICAGO — "Hey, hey, ho, ho, the Contract has got to go," shouted some 1,000 students who participated in a walkout opposing the Contract with America and anti-immigrant legislation like Proposition 187. The students demonstrated in front of Lane Technical High School after first period on Thursday, May 25. Many carried signs saying, "Education is a right, not a privilege," "No to 187," and "Say no to [Gov. Jim] Edgar, say yes to public education."

Lane Tech is the largest high school in Illinois. Latino students comprise around 40 percent of the student body. There are also a significant number of Black, Filipino, and other Asian (Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese) students.

Walkout is organized

Most of the students were particularly concerned with the attacks on immigrant rights. "Proposition 187 is an unjust law that takes away basic human rights," said Marilen Corres, a 15-year-old sophomore at Lane Tech. "I know it will affect a lot of people. My family is all immigrants. Proposals in the Contract will take away grants and scholarships that many of us need to go to college."

Support for a walkout spread as students began meeting after school to discuss how to fight education cuts and attacks on immigrant rights. Meetings were held every week beginning in April and gradually the number of students grew from a few dozen to more than 100.

With the help of the Homeless Coalit-

tion, students organized a bus for the Mother's Day March against the Contract on America and attacks on immigrant rights in downtown Chicago May 13.

After learning about the planned walkout at Lane Tech, students at Whitney Young High School decided to organize a walkout, too. Both schools set the protests for May 25.

Two days before the scheduled walkout, Lane Tech security prevented students from entering the room where they held their weekly meetings. Students were informed that their club had no sponsor, therefore no meeting was allowed.

This didn't stop the students. Despite rain, they met outside to go over the last details of the protest. Fliers publicizing the walkout were passed out to build the event. On the day of the action, word spread that Whitney Young student organizers came to an agreement with their principal. Instead of a walkout, the students would hold a rally in the auditorium.

Parents and students at Lane Tech met with the administration to try to come to a similar agreement before the time of the scheduled walkout. The administration asked that the walkout be canceled, in return they said that students would be allowed to meet with organizers of the protest during lunch periods. This proposal was rejected.

When the bell rang May 25 at 8:50 a.m. students mobilized outside the main entrance. A few minutes later, some 1,000 students joined them walking out of school chanting, "Students united, shall never be defeated."

During the rally students talked about uniting with the teachers in support of their right to strike, which is currently under attack by the city and state governments. They also spoke about the importance of opposing the proposal to build more jails and prisons. There was strong opposition to the city government's plan to close five grammar schools and two high schools at the end of the school year. In the past few weeks, there have been several protests against these closings.

Students concerned with many issues

At the rally, an administrator pleaded that the students return to class and that there would be no reprisals. After the administration agreed to the students' proposal that they be allowed to meet with a representative of the teachers union, and that the protest could continue in the school auditorium, the students ended the walkout.

Once inside, however, the administration refused to provide a sound system. And no representative of the teachers union showed up. Despite this, the protest continued in the school.

Coming out of the protest, the students decided to hold classes on the proposals contained in the Contract with America and on anti-immigrant legislation like Proposition 187.

The students are also forming the Students' Rights Club.

When asked about the results of the walkout, Melissa Batista, a 16-year-old student, replied, "A lot of people have realized the power we have. We went out



High school students protest Proposition 187 in Los Angeles. Students in many cities have joined such actions.

there not knowing the consequences, but we went out anyway because of the cause."

Aislinn Pulley is a sophomore at Lane Technical high school and a member of the Young Socialists.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

The Militant Labor Forum is a weekly free-speech meeting for workers, farmers, youth, and others. All those seeking to advance the fight against injustice and exploitation are welcome to attend and participate in these discussions on issues of importance to working people.

At the Militant Labor Forum you can express your opinion, listen to the views of fellow fighters, and exchange ideas on how best to advance the interests of workers and farmers the world over.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

What's Behind the U.S.-Japan Trade War? Speaker: Michael Italie, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 16, 7:30 p.m. 803 Peachtree St. (Midtown, at 5th Street). Donation: \$3. Tel: (404) 724-9759.

FBI aided growers in fight against farm workers

BY HARRY RING

LOS ANGELES — While the United Farm Workers (UFW) was locked in conflict with California growers, the FBI was conducting a campaign of illegal infiltration and surveillance of the union. The FBI's anti-union operation was first ordered in 1965 by then-president Lyndon Johnson and followed up by his successor, Richard Nixon.

Two newspaper articles described the 1,434-page FBI file on César Chávez who was president of the UFW until his death in 1993. The file was obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, first by the Sacramento, California, *Bee*, then by the *Los Angeles Times*. Their accounts indicate the FBI had close ties with the growers.

In the *Bee* article, Michael Wagner reported, "Although the names of informants and most sources were deleted from the files the FBI released, it appears numerous tips came from growers, including companies the union tried to organize or boycott."

Growers, FBI work together

The growers' ties with the FBI are apparent in the Chávez dossier.

One report from an unnamed stool pigeon declares, "While Chávez is pictured...as a true leader of oppressed farm workers, he actually is the leader of a group of 'beatniks, misfits and winos'...generally dressed in an untidy manner with long hair, wearing sandals."

California Grape Commission president Bruce Obbink says the FBI operation was justified. He told *Los Angeles Times* reporter Alan Miller, "Here you've got a known conflict between employers and the UFW. You've got 500 pickets, or 1,000, or 2,000 running around. You've got every group from prayerful priests to armed revolutionaries showing up in support of this thing, and you've got packing-houses being burned down and vineyards being sawed to the ground...I would think that somebody would look into something."

Pointing to the file, reporter Miller observes, "The FBI relentlessly tracked the farm workers movement but, at the same time, did not aggressively pursue complaints by the union about violence and threats against its members — including the beating of picketers and reports of a plot to assassinate Chávez."

In those battles, which erupted in the mid-1960s, harshly exploited immigrant farm workers, mainly from Mexico and the Philippines, fought to win union contracts, waging strikes and organizing consumer boycotts against California grape and lettuce growers.

The growers resisted fiercely. They signed phony "sweetheart" contracts with corrupt Teamster union bureaucrats and

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Why is Mark Curtis Still In Prison? Speakers: John Cox, Mark Curtis Defense Committee; Chris Spotted Eagle, artist; others. Sat., June 17, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University Ave. (east side of Hwy. 280, on 16A bus line). Donation: \$4. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Haiti: An Eyewitness Report Back. Speaker: Simone Berg, Socialist Workers Party, member of the United Transportation Union. Fri., June 16, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey. Donation: \$4. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

Why Is Mark Curtis Still In Prison? Video presentation of the documentary *The Frame up*

then used Teamster goons against pickets, supplemented by local cops and deputies.

But as Miller says, that was of no concern to the FBI or those who ordered its operation against the union.

Attempt to disrupt the union

According to the *Times* article, the first entry in the file, dated Oct. 8, 1965, reports that an unnamed informer has picked up word that Chávez "possibly has a subversive background."

The report concedes that the snoop "was quite vague," but hastily adds that another informer "has a file on Chávez allegedly showing a communist background."

The same source advises that some of Chávez's associates in the union are also "subversive." But, the report again ruefully adds, "He has no specific indication...on any of the individuals named."

The FBI pressed ahead with its "investigation" of the union, and extended its spying to those who supported the farm workers' strikes and boycott activity.

The bias of the informers was equaled only by their ignorance. One unnamed source advised that in some of its demonstrations, the union used two symbols. One was Our Lady of Guadeloupe, the other the emblem which became the union standard — a black eagle on a red field. The eagle, the tipster advises, "was the symbol used by the Trotskyites in Mexico." Actually, the emblem was derived from an Aztec symbol.

Similarly, a Los Angeles field office report to then-FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover asserted the UFW was going to picket U.S. treasurer Ramona Banuelos for hiring undocumented immigrants in her business.

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MINNESOTA: Twin Cities: 2490 University Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55114. Tel:

of Mark Curtis by film director Nick Castle. Fri., June 16, 7:30 p.m. 1103 E. Carson St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

TEXAS

Houston

AIDS — How to Confront Today's Crisis; Lessons from Cuba's Health Care System; The Changing Face of AIDS in the U.S. Speakers: Paul Hornick, AIDS volunteer and recent participant in Pastors for Peace research trip to Cuba; Brian Herod, AIDS data research worker; Robbie Scherr, Socialist Workers Party, member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers. Fri., June 16, 7:30 p.m. 6969 Gulf Freeway #250. (Woodridge Dr. exit off I-45 at 610 South). Donation: \$4. Tel: (713) 644-9066.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

No U.S. Troops to the Balkans! Fri., June 16,

7:30 p.m. 147 E. 900 S. Donation: \$3. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Struggle for Self-Determination in Ireland

Fri., June 16, 7:30 p.m. Stop FBI Harassment and Political Frame-ups. Panel discussion. Fri., June 23, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 1802 Belmont Rd. NW. Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 387-2178.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

The Legacy of Malcolm X. Speaker: Patrick Brown, Communist League. Fri., June 16, 7 p.m.

Lenin's Final Fight. Mike Peters, Communist League. Fri., June 23, 7 p.m. Both events at 199 High St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

only because of his support for the union but also because, in 1964, he defied the travel ban to Cuba and spent three months there getting a first-hand look at the revolution.

Responding to a *Times* query on the Chávez file, an FBI spokesperson said, "Under today's laws and guidelines, this kind of investigation would not be initiated by the FBI."

Leaving aside the truthfulness of the assertion, there is the fact that President Bill Clinton's "counterterrorism" bill in Congress would, among other things, scrap those "laws and guidelines" and further expand the powers of the FBI.



César Chávez

AUSTRALIA

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BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 071-928-7993.

Manchester: Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Postal code: M4 4AA. Tel: 061-839-1766.

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Paris: MBE 201, 208 rue de la Convention. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (1) 47-26-58-21.

ICELAND

Reykjavík: Klapparstíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 233, 121 Reykjavík. Tel: 552 5502.

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Auckland: La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

Christchurch: 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

CALENDAR

GEORGIA

Atlanta

End the U.S. Blockade of Cuba. Pot luck dinner and fund-raiser. Sponsored by Atlanta Committee on Latin America, Atlanta Network on Cuba. Wed., June 14, 6:30 to 9 p.m. First Iconium Baptist Church, 542 Moreland Ave. SE (Three blocks south of I-20). For more information, call: (404) 687-8323.

Cultural note — Carnival Cruises is offering a west coast theme voyage — "O.J. Trial of the Century." Featuring "comic entertainment, legal experts, TV reporters and other O.J. 'cele-



Harry
Ring

brities.'" Our only question is, how will we know which are the comedians?

'Welfare queens' — In California, which has one of the higher

welfare standards in the country, a mother and two children are granted \$445 a month.

Gov. Pete Wilson now wants to trim that by 25 percent, plus a 10 percent cut for people who are old, blind, or disabled. The guy also wants a 15 percent cut in corporate taxes.

Including capitalist politicians? — "Gingrich says not all species need to be saved from extinction" — News headline.

'To your good health!' — More than 50 million U.S. people are supplied tap water contaminated with radiation, lead, feces and other pollutants. Nearly 1,000 people die from this each year and

at least 400,000 become ill. That's the finding of two studies based on Environmental Protection Agency data. And, it's noted, this is a partial picture. Utilities don't always report violations.

Despite their unceasing efforts — "These [water pollution] reports underscore the fact that the job of protecting public health is never done." — EPA administrator Carol Browner.

Never a dull moment — Recalling 8 billion cigarettes because of filter contamination isn't the only extra chore for Philip Morris. The company is also suing ABC over a TV program spotlighting its practice of increasing nicotine

content to help ensure user addiction. Philip Morris wants \$10 billion in damages.

Another recall — Responding to the Philip Morris suit, ABC asked for the right to examine certain company documents. After three court orders, PM complied by dumping 1 million pages on ABC.

Virtually illegible, the files were reproduced in Black ink on dark red paper — with a nauseating odor. The judge frowned on this and the company promised a new set on white, nonodorous paper.

Great for spare parts — Until a couple of weeks ago, there were

five of BMW's McLaren F1 sports cars in use in Germany, but the number is now down to three. The president of BMW totaled one by driving it into a ditch. A few days earlier, a businessman doing 170 mph on the autobahn hit a center divider, totaling his. The F1 sticker price? \$1.1 million.

Guess she's not a lawyer

— Mary Tolja, who was stuck with a leaky Ford Mustang, was among 65,000 winners in a class-action lawsuit. They were each awarded a \$400 coupon toward the purchase of a new Ford. Their lawyers collected about \$1 million (cash). Tolja, definitely not interested in another Ford, saw the outcome as "asinine."

Rail workers need to fight cuts in training time

BY REBECCA GETTLEMAN

RICHMOND, California — Beginning Jan. 1, 1995, all new hires on the Santa Fe Railway are supposed to learn to be conductors in just 13 weeks. Previously, training for the job both in the yard and on the road, including all the paper work, took two years. Three weeks in classroom training, nine weeks on-the-job training, and one week field training is supposed to do the trick now. Other railroads such as

have noted an increase in derailments and other accidents. The new trainees are under incredible pressure to work quickly and ignore safety, and at the same time, the company responds to their lack of experience by heaping on disciplinary action for making mistakes. New workers are in constant fear of losing their job.

Although some new hires are featured praising the conductor training program in a recent issue of the company newspaper, the *Santa Fe Railway News*, one of them was quoted as saying, "There's no way you can learn everything you need to know in one 13-week class." The Santa Fe considers the training program a success system-wide because most new workers pass the written exams. But there is little written work required to do the job. When the new employees are done with their training, there is little room for error. Small mistakes can mean someone's life.

At a recent Town Hall meeting where Don McInnes, the chief executive officer of Santa Fe and a number of other bosses came to have a "dialogue" with rail workers, the company's disregard for the safety of workers and surrounding communities clearly showed through.

When several workers raised the likelihood that someone will be killed because of the lack of training, McInnes responded that more communication, teamwork, give and take, and finding solutions through joint union/company safety committees was all that was needed.

When a worker raised that we cannot possibly take them seriously when they say put safety first and then make someone a conductor in 13 weeks, Jim Martin, the Valley division superintendent, replied that returning to the two-year training program was "off the wall."

Most of the meeting focused on the higher profits that will result from the merger with the Burlington Northern, while workers will face inevitable layoffs. UTU members have been working under an expired contract since the beginning of the year and the company has stated that negotiations will not take place until the merger goes through. Meanwhile, in Lenexa, Kansas, the Santa Fe is rotating management through week-long classes on switching, running locomotives, and being conductors in preparation for a possible strike.

Company attempts to erode safety and the conditions of work on the railroads can be pushed back, but it will take a united fight. As long as companies like the Santa Fe put profits before human life, workers

will always be subject to worsening working conditions, lower wages, more injuries and accidents, and speedup. We have to place blame where blame is due, on the company. We have to rise above the divisions the company tries to promote among rail workers.

Rail workers are in a weaker position to fight due to the concessions made over the years, such as the two-tier wage system. But new and younger workers who come to the railroad thinking they have landed a good job and lifelong career are learning quickly that their lives are often at risk so that the company can rake in millions in profits. They are also learning quickly the need for basic solidarity so that we can say no to unacceptable work conditions.

Rail workers can look to the examples of other workers like those who struck the Soo Line last year and the more recent Canadian Rail strike. By putting up a fight workers were able to hold off the bosses attempts to thoroughly gut union rights. These strike actions showed the power workers on the railroad have when we stick together and use union power.

Rail workers can also look to the struggles of our class around the world. Many co-workers on the Santa Fe have been eager to hear about the recent International Youth Brigade to Cuba that I and another co-worker participated in this past January. They wanted to learn about the conditions of workers there and how they are fighting the effects of the economic crisis. Rail workers can also learn a lesson from South African working people who mobilized in demonstrations of tens of thousands to protest the recent deaths of gold



Militant/Jon Hillson
Soo Line worker protests safety problems on the railroad during 1994 strike.

miners due to company negligence.

The Santa Fe has a slogan, which it hypocritically promotes while it shows no concern for our lives: "You have the right and obligation to work safely." Only rail workers themselves, fighting against company attempts to undercut safe working conditions, can make safety a reality.

Rebecca Gettlemann is a member of UTU Local 1730 at the Santa Fe railroad in Richmond and a member of the Young Socialists.

- 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO -



the newly formed Citizens' Committee for the Right of Free Political Expression.



June 16, 1945

The International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders and Helpers of America was ordered this week by the Los Angeles Superior Court either to admit Negroes into its San Pedro local (92) on a basis of complete equality; or grant full autonomy, including the right to conduct contract negotiations with employers, to the all-colored auxiliary A-35. The decision, handed down in the case of Blakeney vs. California Shipbuilding Corporation, is considered in local Negro circles as an important victory for workers.

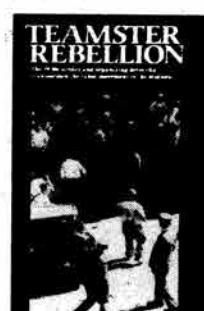
In their complaint and in the testimony before the court, the six Negroes who instituted the suit charged that though they had to pay the same fees, assessments and dues as paid by whites, they were allocated to an inferior status in a Jim Crow auxiliary and were discriminated against in job opportunities.

Although in the present case the judge found in favor of the Negroes, his decision does not necessitate the abolition of the Jim Crow auxiliary, which was one of the demands of the plaintiffs.

Teamster Rebellion

by FARRELL DOBBS

The 1934 strikes that built a fighting union movement in Minneapolis, recounted by a leader of that battle. The first in a four-volume series on the Teamster-led strikes and organizing drives in the Midwest that helped pave the way for the CIO and pointed a road toward independent labor political action. \$16.95



Available at bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, add \$3 to cover postage and handling.

This increased level of police activity on the case, as well as these first arrests in a *gusano* attack on the radical movement, indicate that the police department and city administration are beginning to respond to the pressure being generated by

No to execution of Abu-Jamal!

Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge recently signed the warrant for the August 17 execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a prominent radio reporter and political activist who has been on death row for 13 years. The governor's action came just three days before Abu-Jamal's lawyers were to file a petition to appeal his conviction. Working people the world over should demand that this rush to murder be stopped.

Jamal was convicted of killing a Philadelphia cop in 1982. The prosecution's main witnesses were prostitutes who fingered Abu-Jamal in exchange for being able to "work their corner" without any harassment from the cops. Much of their testimony was contradictory. Witnesses who saw another man fleeing the scene at the time of the shooting were effectively silenced by police intimidation and coercion. Abu-Jamal, who was also shot, was beaten by police on the scene and again after he was taken to the hospital.

Although no physical evidence linked Abu-Jamal with the murder, the Pennsylvania prosecutor pressed ahead and today the governor and the cops are pushing to speed up the execution date.

Abu-Jamal is especially dangerous to the government authorities and the cops because he refuses to give up his right to speak out and remain a political person in prison. He earned the enmity of the cops while he was a radio reporter exposing police attacks against the MOVE organization.

The death penalty is a class weapon in the hands of the rulers of this country. To them, the working class, or at least the biggest portion of it, is a criminal class. The capitalist owners of industry and the banks have created an extensive repressive apparatus, which includes the death penalty, to safeguard their domination and property.

The inmates in the country's bulging jails are mostly workers, drawn disproportionately from the most oppressed sectors of the working class. Police harassment and violence is aimed at keeping the exploited in their place, at attempting to squelch any conduct deemed rebellious, unruly, or disorderly — whether it is on the picket line, at a farm gate, or in the streets of the Black community. Mumia Abu-Jamal, who is a political activist and fighter against these injustices, is a bad exam-

ple as far as the rulers of this country are concerned and they are determined to see him executed.

Supporters of Abu-Jamal and opponents of the death penalty have a big fight in front of us. The government and the cops are also mobilizing to see that the sentence against Abu-Jamal is carried out, and that even his voice is stifled.

Cops from New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia picketed a recent meeting in New York City that was trying to raise funds for the defense effort. Maureen Faulkner, the widow of the slain cop, is spearheading a campaign to deny Abu-Jamal freedom of speech. Faulkner and cop organizations are promoting a boycott against Addison-Wesley for publishing Abu-Jamal's book *Live from Death Row*.

Activists from around the world have championed Abu-Jamal's cause and demanded that he be given a new trial. Many see the injustice of his trial and sentence, as he was convicted without any physical evidence by a mostly white jury. The judge who gave the activist the death penalty has sentenced more working people to death than any other judge in the country, almost 95 percent of them non-whites.

The cops, courts, prisons, and death rows have one purpose — to repress, intimidate, and terrorize working people — to force them to accept their place in capitalist society with its inequalities and oppression. The thousands of prisoners on death row across the country are victims of class exploitation and racial oppression.

More protests are needed and more opponents of the death penalty have to get involved to stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Rallies and press conferences across the country held June 5 from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C., were a start in this campaign.

Working people in the United States should emulate the struggle led by the African National Congress in South Africa.

There, as a result of the advancing democratic revolution, the constitutional court voted to abolish the death penalty on June 6. This victory removes a weapon of terror against working people and stands as a conquest for human dignity.

We urge our readers to join in the effort to defend Mumia Abu-Jamal and say no to the death penalty.

Defend affirmative action

Affirmative action is a "system of special privilege," that "pits group against group, race against race," asserts presidential aspirant and California governor Pete Wilson. "No one envisioned that redressing two centuries of unfairness would launch a whole new era of unfairness." Hoping to boost his presidential possibilities, Wilson is adding assault against affirmative action for Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and women to his anti-working-class repertoire.

But it is not affirmative action that divides working people, and it is not Black, Latino, Asian, or women workers who benefit from groups being pitted against one another. Bosses do.

The biggest division working people face is between employed and unemployed; it is used by the bosses to force workers to accept speed up, lower wages, and worse working conditions as the competition for jobs gets fiercer. The employers also stand to gain a lot if they can pay one layer of workers less than others, and if they can play off one group against another, using skin color, sex, nationality, or language to do it.

Wilson is simply speaking up for the "privileged" bosses who pay his way to office. Working people have a life-and-death interest in fighting to eliminate the capacity of the employers to divide us.

The capitalist class seeks justifications to pay workers less, and if they succeed in shortchanging women or immigrant workers they use it to lower the wage for all workers. The employers set pay from the bottom up.

Affirmative action is aimed at cutting across the divisions that the bosses reproduce every chance they get. They are the experts at using prejudice to defend their privileges.

Affirmative action is not primarily about 200 years of history, it is about what is happening today. Blacks, Latinos, and women are a disproportionate number of those workers who are unemployed, or who receive the lowest pay, and live in the worst conditions.

It was through struggles for equal rights and just treat-

ment in housing, education, and employment that Blacks, other oppressed nationalities, and women began to close the gap that so long existed in wages and social conditions. But with the growing economic crisis the bosses are trying to impose harsher conditions on all workers, and without a fight by working people to defend our rights, the gap will grow wider.

The labor movement should respond to Wilson and other capitalist politicians by fighting to defend and extend affirmative action. To close the gap between better and worse off workers we need to put a struggle to raise the minimum wage on the front burner, too. And to deal with unemployment we should demand a shorter work-week with no cut in pay — 30 hours work for 40 hours pay — to create more jobs and spread the available work. A fight by the labor movement for these demands can unite working people and strengthen all of us against the employers.

The attacks on affirmative action, like those on the rights of immigrant workers, will continue because capitalist politicians will keep trying to divide us. They will keep offering scapegoats for the worsening conditions they must try to impose to save their system. But the outcome of these attempts to push us back is far from determined.

When tens of thousands mobilized to oppose the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 initiative, it had a deep impact on whether or not the government would go ahead with the denial of rights to undocumented workers and their families at hospitals, schools, and government offices. A judge prudently ruled it could not be done at this time.

The lesson for all defenders of affirmative action is that we should jump into the debate and follow the lead of students at California universities who responded with protests to defend the rights of women and oppressed nationalities when proposals were floated to change admissions policies and eliminate affirmative action.

Illinois unionists to hold June 25 solidarity march

BY DAVID MARSHALL

DECATUR, Illinois — Trade unionists in Decatur will hold a solidarity march and rally on June 25 to support workers involved in three long-standing labor disputes in this city. Some 8 percent of the workforce here is or has recently been on strike or locked out.

The action will mark the two-year anniversary of A.E. Staley Mfg. Co.'s lockout of 760 corn processing workers, and comes five days after the one-year anniversary of the nationwide strike by United Auto Workers (UAW) members against Caterpillar. It has been called by UAW Local 751, United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) Local 7837, and United Rubber Workers (URW) Local 713. The URW members recently ended their 10-month strike against Bridgestone/Firestone without winning a contract.

"We want to let CAT know we're as strong as we've ever been and that we're never going to weaken," UAW Local 751 vice president John Boedtman told the *Militant*. "This struggle with CAT and Staley is still going on, and the rally will help to spread the word all over the country."

Unionists from across the U.S. are planning to attend the June 25 action said Dike Ferris, UPIU Local 7837's bargaining committee chairman. "Our Campaign for Justice office gets calls every day," Ferris said. "I just talked yesterday with a group of union nurses who are sending a vanload down from New York. We even have confirmations from Toronto and from a group of flour millers who work at ADM-Ogilvie in Montreal."

After assembling at 10 a.m. at the three union halls, participants will march through Decatur to the civic center, where Rev. Jesse Jackson and other speakers will address a rally. Organizers are encouraging union members and others to come to Decatur to participate and show their support.

"These attacks you see on labor here — the rotating shifts, lack of safety, gutting seniority rights — all this is right around the corner for the entire labor movement," Ferris warned. "People should come here and see what these companies are doing to the labor movement."

For more information on the June 25 events in Decatur, call UPIU Local 7837's Campaign for Justice office at (217) 872-2205.

Argentina students

Continued from Page 10

and vote on Menem's proposal. The action infuriated the president, who called the students "seditious, anti-democratic, and fascist." This widely publicized comment was the point of much ridicule during the June 7 demonstrations.

"Today's youth are not like those even of my time," said Alicia Castiglione, 31, who is the general secretary of the University Federation of Argentina, the national organization of college students that called the June 7 marches. "Those entering [the universities] are no longer the apathetic ones who lived through the military dictatorship — now they're not afraid."

In provinces such as Córdoba and Río Negro, striking teachers and other unionists have joined the students in their protests against the Law on Higher Education.

Many workers and students interviewed by *Militant* reporters in Córdoba and Buenos Aires pointed to the new education bill as another piece of the austerity measures that the capitalist rulers here have been implementing to shift the burden of a deep-going economic crisis onto the backs of working people.

On June 6, Finance Minister Domingo Cavallo announced that Argentina was officially in a recession. The government will not pay federal employees their June wages until mid-July, Cavallo said, in order to meet "obligations with the International Monetary Fund" — that is to continue paying interest on the country's foreign debt to imperialist banks and other financial institutions. In most provinces other than Buenos Aires, state employees — including teachers, hospital workers, and water and electrical utility workers — have not been paid for nearly two months. The resulting desperate economic conditions have provoked occupations of hospitals and government ministries, strikes, and street protests often met by fierce police repression.

"The fight is far from over," said Manuel Raúl Arce, 23, from the University of La Plata, as the June 7 protest outside the National Congress was winding down. "Menem rammed through his education bill. Let's see how he does with his other measures."

Militant summer schedule

During the month of July the *Militant* will be taking a few weeks off from its regular publishing schedule. There will be no issues printed on July 6 or July 13. The paper will print on July 20 and take another week off on July 27. Regular weekly publication resumes August 3.

Judge sends two Yellowknife miners to jail

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Judge John Vertes May 5 sentenced Canadian Auto Workers union (CAW) members Al Shearing and Tim Bettger to two and a half and three years respectively in jail. They will soon be transferred to a federal penitentiary.

Bettger and Shearing were recently convicted of breaking into Royal Oak's Giant mine in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, to paint anti-scab graffiti and setting an explosion in a ventilation shaft on June 29, 1992. Bettger was sentenced to six more months in prison for blowing a hole in a television satellite dish Sept. 1, 1992. These events took place during an 18-month strike against the company's attempt to bust the union. The two miners were members of the Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers union (CASAW) Local 4 at the time. In May 1994 CASAW merged into the CAW.

In the courtroom Bettger said that "union members felt provoked into the labor dispute by management that abused its workers and disregarded safety. Then Royal Oak brought in union busters and thugs." At one point during the strike, Bettger continued, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) inspector Dennis Massey, "after showing us his gun, offered to use it on us. When the guys you are supposed to complain to are the bad guys, who do you complain to?"

CAW miner Amos Simon, who works at the Giant mine, told the *Militant* that the "sentences were way too harsh."

"This is a ridiculous sentence," said Kathy Hrynczuk, a member of the Union of Northern Workers. "There are wife beaters and child molesters that get less jail time or suspended sentences in the Yellowknife area."

Striking miners fought and eventually beat back Royal Oak's attempt to bust the union with replacement workers, Pinkerton goons, and police violence.

Bettger and Shearing previously spent

eight months in the Yellowknife Correctional Institute on charges resulting from participation in the strike. The two miners were released on bail after a preliminary inquiry last June. The judge threw out five of eight charges against Shearing and three out of 11 charges against Bettger. Shearing spent an additional five months in jail earlier in the strike on other charges, including throwing a broom stick handle against a truck driven by a Pinkerton goon.

Severe bail conditions were imposed on the two union members for almost one year, including a 9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. curfew. The judge restricted them from attending union meetings, visiting the union hall, or participating in any other union activities. At the time of their sentencing, one charge was dropped against Shearing and five were dropped against Bettger. They pleaded guilty to the remaining charges against them. Since no one was hurt during the events they pleaded guilty to, the serious charges of intending to injure were dropped.

In the courtroom, Bettger, speaking for himself and Shearing said, "There was an unreal environment at the time. Normal avenues to end the dispute were coming to nothing.... Everything was tilted. None of the rules of the world seemed to apply any longer. The fact that I descended to the company's level only contributes to my shame...for what it's worth I want to apologize to my family."

Bettger added, "Despite our forced removal from the intimacy of our friends and families, Al and I have resolved to continue the fight for justice for Roger Warren in whatever manner we are allowed. To that end we are intending to aid Roger's lawyer in any way at our disposal. We lived through the turbulent period in labor history and know many things which were excluded from the evidence at his trial. These facts should have been considered but as they would have decimated much of the Crown's proof for

their theory, the court refused to allow them into evidence."

During the strike, an explosion occurred that killed nine replacement workers and union members who crossed the picket line. For 13 months after the blast, the RCMP harassed and interrogated hundreds of strikers, their families, and supporters. Telephones were wiretapped, and some had their houses searched.

The company used this "investigation" to wear down strikers and undercut community support for their fight. One year after the blast, Royal Oak owner Margaret Witte announced she would refuse to negotiate with the union until an arrest was made. In an attempt to help resolve the strike CAW miner Roger Warren falsely confessed to setting the blast. He was charged, convicted, and sentenced to life imprisonment January 25.

Warren is appealing the conviction, which was based solely on the contrived confession to police. The RCMP came up with no evidence linking Warren to the blast. In the trial, presiding judge Mark de Weerd admitted that all evidence in this case was circumstantial.

An appeal written by union activists in support of Warren is now circulating in Yellowknife, according to a May 18 *Vancouver Sun* article entitled, "Gold-mine bomber 'falsely convicted,' union activists say."

The article notes that the two page newsletter circulating in Yellowknife explains that Warren was falsely convicted of second degree murder and may not survive his 20-year sentence.

The *Sun* article is a reprint of a piece by Jim Farrell from the *Edmonton Journal*. It reports that the newsletter ends with the point that Warren is faced with a "sick,



Al Shearing (above) and fellow miner Tim Bettger were sentenced for damaging mine during 18-month strike at Royal Oak's Giant mine in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

gross and unjust verdict. Roger is innocent. Please help."

Letters and messages can be sent to Roger Warren, Stoney Mountain Institution, P.O. Box 9250, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 3W9. Donations to his defense fund can be sent to: The Warren Fund, 228 Borden Drive, Yellowknife, NWT X1A 2R2.

Ned Dmytryshyn is a member of the International Association of Machinists Lodge 692.

today.

We bring this to your attention as the latest example of questionable justice in the territories. We suggest that the incident should raise questions about the proclaimed independence of the judges and the administration of justice.

It also provides another glimpse at just who is really calling the shots up here. We don't like what we see!

Al Shearing
Tim Bettger
Yellowknife Correctional Centre
Northwest Territories, Canada

Notes from our readers

I bought my first *Militant* in 1969 at an antiwar demo in Boston. It was a good paper then. It's an even better paper now. Keep up the good work. Venceremos!

A reader
Lawrence, Massachusetts

Great working-class newspaper. If possible would like to see articles on conditions in former socialist countries.

A reader
Baltimore, Maryland

Couldn't do without you! Especially your Irish coverage.

A reader
New York, New York

I like the *Militant* very much, as it is clear and to the point, and helps to gain a better understanding of socialism.

A reader
Hartford, Connecticut

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.



This being the case, when we buy a commodity that working people produce, the cost of these skyscrapers is factored into the price we have to pay.

Steve Halpern
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Judicial generosity

I had to drop you a line to let you in on a little quirk of justice, as it is practiced in the Northwest Territories. Here are the facts.

A man flies into Yellowknife to commence an employment contract at Colomac Mines. Colomac is a subsidiary of the company publicly traded as Royal Oak Mines, under the direction of the notorious CEO Peggy Witte.

This man is arrested on arrival by Yellowknife RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] on outstanding warrants. Coincidentally, this man was a scab, heliported in during the labor dispute at Royal Oak Giant mine.

In court, the man is sentenced to 21 days. In a very strange gesture of judicial generosity, the man is permitted to fulfill his employment contract of six weeks before he is to be taken into cus-

LETTERS

Solidarity with Cuba

The recent experiences I had in Cuba, with nine other members of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign from Britain, to see first-hand how the Cuban people are confronting their deep economic crisis, confirms for me the importance of building the "Cuba Lives" festival in August.

In the province of Santiago de Cuba we talked with schoolchildren, medical students, teachers, farmers, agricultural, railroad, factory, and construction workers, as well as senior citizens. We discussed with members of the Union of Young Communists, Communist Party, the national women's organization, union representatives, and others.

We had daily discussion with our tour interpreters and the driver of our tour bus, who at the age of 12 was a messenger for the July 26 movement in the Batista days. The majority of those we spoke to proudly told us of the achievements of their revolution and that despite the hardships they suffer as a result of the U.S. government embargo, are adamant that there can be no capitulation to imperialism and no turning back to a system rooted in the exploitation of labor.

Workers told us how through their assemblies and community discussions they are finding ways to improve things — to increase food supplies, repair and replace worn out machinery and equipment, and deal with the issues of redundancy, unemployment, and transport.

One of the most important experiences I had was learning what it means for Cubans to talk with people from around the world who are in solidarity with their struggle, and to discuss together Cuba's vanguard role in the context of the world crisis of capital-

ism. We were frequently told how this helped and encouraged them in continuing their struggle, whatever sacrifices have to be made.

The Cuba Solidarity Campaign is supporting the festival, and is organizing a national march and rally in London in October, when activists from many other countries will be holding solidarity demonstrations.

The campaign is also planning a rally in London on June 17 to celebrate the send-off of two containers of material aid.

Connie Harris
London, England

Affirmative action

In Laura Garza's article "Government takes aim at affirmative action" she points out how existing affirmative action programs are eroding.

The result is that there continues to be a significant disparity between the wages of white men and the wages of women, Latinos, and Blacks.

Why is it that in this day and age employers continue to pay working people who are not white men lower wages?

All working people only receive a small fraction of what our labor is worth. Although we are never allowed to have the fruits of our labor, we can see where the wealth goes that working people produce.

In every major city in this country we can see numerous skyscrapers, each one costing hundreds of millions of dollars to build. The people who work in these buildings are required to wear expensive clothing just to have what is considered an acceptable appearance. However, for the most part, nothing is ever produced in any of these buildings that working people either want or

need.

What does all of this have to do with discrimination? Since employers pay workers only a fraction of the wealth that we produce, and Blacks, Latinos, and women receive even lower wages, we must conclude that these workers are in fact superexploited. The lower the wage of those who are discriminated against, the larger the profit for the capitalist.

In other words, the skyscrapers that I mentioned are in part paid for with the dilapidated housing, run-down schools, and substandard health-care facilities in the Black and Latino communities.

When we look at discrimination in this light I think we can conclude that the root cause of discrimination has nothing to do with race or sex, but has everything to do with money.

Therefore the fight for affirmative action is a fight for the dignity

'Not just jobs, public life is at stake'

Protests, debate surround Quebec government plans to close hospitals

MICHEL DUGRÉ

MONTREAL — Protests involving thousands of working people are being organized almost every day since the Quebec government announced plans May 11 to close nine hospitals in the Montreal area. Close to 1,600 beds are slated to be lost in the coming year. More than 9,500 workers will be effected by these cuts, with several thousands losing their jobs altogether. The Parti Quebecois (PQ) government has no plan to transfer services to other hospitals.

"We might lose our jobs," said Sharon Blackman, a nurse at the Lachine General Hospital, "but what's at stake here is the public's life."

Coalitions of trade unions, community organizations, and hospital workers are springing up to organize against these drastic cuts. A number of streets in Montreal are draped with banners declaring "My hospital, I keep it."

While these actions were being organized in Montreal, more than 5,000 people demonstrated in Quebec City in front of the Christ-Roi hospital. This facility has not yet even been slated for cuts.

Prime minister greeted by protests

When Quebec's premier Jacques Parizeau spoke at a Montreal hotel May 29 some 500 trade union members picketed. Earlier in the day a similar number demonstrated in front of the Santa Cabrini hospital against service cuts announced by the local administration.

More than 800 hospital workers dressed in black, went to the Montreal Expos baseball game May 31 to publicize their fight to keep the hospitals open. The next day, some 400 people participated in a vigil against the closing down of the Queen Elizabeth hospital.

Hundreds of health-care workers also participated in the Women's March against Poverty in Quebec City June 4.

The decision to close hospitals comes despite the PQ government's earlier promise that it would freeze its social service budget, rather than impose major cutbacks. Parizeau is blaming cuts in transfer payments from the federal government to



Militant/Monica Jones
Union members march in Montreal against social service cuts in February. Banner reads, "Social Equality." Almost daily protests oppose plans to close hospitals.

the provinces for the hospital closings.

Of the 7 million people living in Quebec, 80 percent make up an oppressed French-speaking nationality. With the crisis of the capitalist economy, the oppression of Quebecois is deepening.

In February 1995, a record 808,000 people depended on social welfare benefits in Quebec, more than 11 percent of the population. In addition, 381,000 people received unemployment compensation during the same period. Thus, about one in four people in Quebec depend on either welfare or unemployment benefits, two years into an upturn in the economy.

Government attacks on social services are especially explosive in Quebec where the fight against the national oppression of Quebecois has often taken the form of struggles to improve health and education services. Quebec's hospitals and schools

are divided into separate English-and French-language systems. Schools are also divided into Protestant and Catholic. The English-language schools and hospitals are markedly superior to those serving francophones.

Quebecois earn on the average 16 percent less than those who speak English in Quebec. Their chances of getting a university diploma are just half of those who speak English. The rate of functional illiteracy among francophones in Canada is almost double the rate among anglophones.

Unionists debate government actions

Delegates to the May 19 meeting of the federal council of the Federation of Social Affairs (FAS) of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) overwhelmingly adopted a motion that "the FAS take

publicly a position against the sovereigntist project of the Parti Quebecois (PQ) as long as its current social policies and its approach on the question of social services are not changed." One delegate explained that "We are not against sovereignty as such, but against a sovereignty that means that hospitals are closed and social services cut." The FAS organizes close to 100,000 health-care workers in Quebec and represents 40 percent of the CSN membership.

CSN president Gérald Larose, who attended the meeting, opposed the decision arguing that Quebec sovereignty and social services are two completely different things. This was also the reaction of Parizeau who said, "It doesn't make sense to negotiate the future of a country for a question of wages."

This debate broke out during 435 public hearings involving 55,000 participants organized by Quebec's Commission on the Future of Quebec during February and March. The PQ government had hoped to use the hearings to broaden public support for its referendum to establish a "sovereign" Quebec, in which the provincial government would have substantially greater powers than it now has. Instead, many working people and other participants kept raising questions about how to solve unemployment and reduce poverty.

The majority of participants supported one form or another of greater autonomy for Quebec, though not necessarily the PQ's proposal. "It is high time that we draw a line on the Canadian experience and that we pledge ourselves to move toward greater control of our future through building our own country: Quebec," said Janvier Cliche, president of the CSN central council for the region of Estrie, at one of the meetings.

Preoccupied with maintaining gains

But many asked how the PQ's sovereignty proposal would affect the conditions of poor women, of farmers, handicapped people, and others. They were preoccupied in particular with maintaining social services and programs.

"Quebec sovereignty without a real collective perspective of social solidarity would be an empty shell," said one participant at a meeting in Montreal. "Why build a new country if it is only a pale copy of what it was," asked Robert Tremblay, from the Anti-poverty Organization.

This debate illustrates divergent class interests coming more and more to the surface on the question of Quebec sovereignty. The PQ government represents the interests of a small layer of capitalists in Quebec aspiring to use their greater control over the government as a weapon in their fight against their capitalist rivals in Canada and internationally.

In contrast, health-care workers have been at the center of some of the most important battles against national oppression, especially through their fights for improving living and working conditions, overcoming social inequalities between men and women, and eliminating regional disparities in the quality of social services.

While the capitalist media focuses on the debate between Quebec and Ottawa leading up to the sovereignty referendum, that is not the center of the ongoing fight of Quebecois against their oppression. Public opinion polls show close to half of all voters support the PQ's sovereignty proposal, however, it has generated little enthusiasm among working people, even those who plan to vote for it.

The real fight against national oppression is today centered on the defense of working people's social gains won through decades of struggle. And that fight is bringing thousands of working people into the streets.

20,000 in Quebec rally against poverty

BY GRANT HARGRAVE
AND KATY LEROUGETEL

QUEBEC CITY — Some 20,000 people from throughout the province of Quebec demonstrated June 4 against government social policies in front of the National Assembly building here. The protest was the culmination of the Women's March Against Poverty, which saw hundreds of women walk from Montreal, Longueuil, and Rivière-du-Loup to the provincial capital over 10 days. Government statistics show that Quebec leads the country in the number of people living in poverty.

Participants who walked the entire trip were joined by others who marched for shorter periods of time. There was daily media coverage of the protesters as they made their way to Quebec City.

The march centered on nine demands, including an immediate Can\$2-per-hour (US\$1-Can\$0.72) increase in the minimum wage to Can\$8.15, a new law for wage equality, the creation of 1,500 new public housing units per year, automatic paycheck deduction of alimony, a freeze on tuition fees, and a reduction in the time immigrant women are dependent on their sponsors from 10 years to 3.

The feeder marches, which began hundreds of miles from the provincial capital, and the Quebec City demonstration were initiated by the Quebec Women's Federa-

tion. A broad coalition of organizations that included many women's groups and the three main union federations in the province built the actions.

About 20 Filipina members of Standing Tall, a group of women employed as home-care workers, took part in the demonstration. Many hospital workers also joined the protest.

Day-care workers, who are in an ongoing struggle for a decent wage, were involved in the march preparations from the beginning. Marielle, a member of the Day-care Workers Union from the Quebec City region said, "families cannot live on a single salary" anymore.

A bus brought women from the South Asian Women's Community Center in Montreal, which assists new immigrants, particularly women, coming into Canada. Sadega, a member of the group, said women would be hit particularly hard by the government proposed hospital closings. Women "will have to take care of the elderly and the sick," she said.

A group from Muslim Women of Montreal also participated in the demonstration. "We have the same problems as other women," Zounkha said. "But we have an extra problem because we wear a scarf, so some employers are not ready to hire us even if we are as qualified as someone else."

Muslim women in Quebec have come

under pressure here not to wear a headscarf in school. "How I dress is my choice," Zounkha said.

"I'm here for the question of the minimum wage," explained Jean-Guy Beaudin, "it really is too low." Beaudin, who marched with his family, works at a youth center near Montreal and is a member of the Confederation of National Trade Unions. His son works for minimum wage in a restaurant. It was Beaudin's first demonstration in Quebec City and he was left "disappointed by the response of the government. But maybe this will be the start of a wave" of protest, he said.

Many well-known performers and public figures greeted the crowd, as well as numerous government ministers. When Louise Harel, Quebec's employment minister, announced an October 1 raise in the minimum wage from Can\$6 an hour to Can\$6.45, the crowd booted.

Quebec premier Jacques Parizeau took the mike to argue that a greater wage hike would endanger jobs. Many demonstrators booed him. The government announced several other measures in response to the marchers' demands.

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